


LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
R78P
v. 3

PHILIP DARRELL.

VOL. III.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

PHILIP DARRELL.

A Romance of English Home Life.

BY

ALBERT E. ROWCROFT.

God comes with leaden feet, but strikes with iron hands.
OLD PROVERB.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1875.

[The right of translation, dramatic adaptation, and reproduction is reserved].

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

823
R7870
v. 3

CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Allen Heyson begins to intrigue—Results of his manœuvring—Tom's successes as a Professor of Music—Adèle yearns with a terrible yearning—A letter from Doctor Renhard to Tom—Philip begins to hope again that Tom will become steady ...	1—20

CHAPTER II.

The Detective baffled—Mrs Wright seeks a clue to her husband's hiding-place—She meets Mr Allerton, and tells him her story—The results—Mr Allerton talks about it with Dr Renhard—The Detective calls on Dr Renhard—The chain links forged very rapidly now	21—41
--	-------

CHAPTER III.

John Wright resumes his ceaseless vigils—Tom Darrell notices that a shadow is always dogging his foot-steps—The wraith of Katie Wright—Tom sees the placards—Adèle notices his embarrassment—The cast of the dice	42—68
--	-------

CHAPTER IV.

	PAGE
Great rejoicings in — Square—All the parish is interested in Fanny Renhard's marriage with John Allerton—The lovely bridesmaids—The worthy fathers—The amiable mothers—The joyful sisters—The bonny bride and bridegroom—The link-men levy black mail—The footmen levy black mail, and the guests pay thus for the wine they drink at Dr Renhard's expense —' Thank God it's all over'	69—94

CHAPTER V.

Mrs Wright in Maidstone — Secret affinity—She fancies she sees her husband—John Wright's list-soled boots — Mr Griffith speaks to him, and asks him about the sorrow of his life—John Wright's answer —' It will soon be over now, sir'—Allen Heyson becomes anxious about Adèle—Philip! happy Philip!	95—113
---	--------

CHAPTER VI.

A drop of water falling on stone—Tom Darrell and Adèle—Philip becomes restless—An organist and choir-master wanted—Allen persuades Tom to try for it—Tom leaves Philip's house	114—127
---	---------

CHAPTER VII.

Mrs Wright sends a message to the Detective—She sees Philip Darrell's name on the door—	
---	--

	PAGE
plate—The Detective pays a visit to Maidstone and wonders how he could have been such a fool!—Philip and Mr Fairtree—Adèle hears something about Tom and Katie 128—144	128—144

CHAPTER VIII.

'Did you love her, Tom?'—'No! on my honour, Adèle'—The intoxication of a moment—Tom's superstition saves Adèle—A warning voice—Too late!—Two faces upturned in the moonlight—Allen Heyson's agony 145—158	145—158
---	---------

CHAPTER IX.

Philip seeks an explanation from Allen—A sad, mournful story—Philip is incredulous—The blindness of Fate—Tom sees again the wraith of Katie Wright, and listens to the soft footsteps—A moment of remorse—Philip's melancholy 159—185	159—185
--	---------

CHAPTER X.

Adèle sends for Tom—The last link is being forged—Tom throws his last scruples behind him—The silent watch-dog—Allen Heyson scents danger—Allen follows Adèle—The meeting by the willows—Allen saves Adèle—John Wright's revenge ... 186—212	186—212
--	---------

CHAPTER XI.

Old enemies face to face—As through a mist—	
---	--

	PAGE
The blankness of despair—John Wright in prison—Tom Darrell leaves England for America	213—233

CHAPTER XII.

Breaking the news—‘My boy! My Allen!’— A restless night—Allen becomes delirious—‘She is very lovely, mother!’— ‘Only my life; not my love!’—Adèle’s remorse—Philip hears of John Wright’s arrest	234—250
---	---------

CHAPTER XIII.

Philip visits John Wright in prison—‘I do not think I killed Katie’—Tom Darrell nowhere to be found—Allen becomes worse—An accident happens—All hope is lost— ‘Kiss me, Adèle!’	251—272
---	---------

CHAPTER XIV.

The trial of John Wright for the murder of his daughter—Disclosures concerning Tom Darrell—Witnesses come from Shirley, from London, from Leyton, and from Maidstone—John Wright is acquitted—Adèle learns how base Tom Darrell was	273—285
---	---------

CHAPTER XV.

After four years—Adèle’s confession ‘Come,—sit by my side, darling!’—The last of Tom Darrell—Conclusion	286—295
--	---------

PHILIP DARRELL.

CHAPTER I.

ALLEN HEYSON BEGINS TO INTRIGUE—RESULTS OF HIS
MANŒUVRING—TOM'S SUCCESSES AS A PROFESSOR OF
MUSIC—ADÈLE YEARNs WITH A TERRIBLE YEARNING—A
LETTER FROM DOCTOR RENHARD TO TOM—PHILIP BEGINS
TO HOPE AGAIN THAT TOM WILL BECOME STEADY.

ALLEN HEYSON had not watched Adèle and Tom for nothing, and in his solitary walk she had revolved many plans in his head, that all were devoted to the idea of keeping Tom away from Adèle. One evening he had a glimpse of a project that seemed so plausible and easy to carry out, that he abruptly left the tea-table at the Woodlands, and set out on one of his long walks, to hammer it into definite shape.

Apparently he succeeded in coming to a proper conclusion, for one might have noticed that just after this Allen became quite enthusiastic about Tom's knowledge of music, his splendid voice, his brilliant touch of the piano. And as every one knew in Maidstone what really good judges of music the Heysons all were, his friends soon caught up the cry. Allen took Tom with him to several evening parties, and managed to have him called upon to sing and play, knowing very well how fond Tom was of both, and that he would not mind singing and playing, and accompanying others all the evening, or as long as the songs went on. And as every one was quite enchanted with his 'style,' and justly pleased and grateful for his kindness, Allen's scheme began to develop. It was not long before all Maidstone spoke of Tom. He sang in two concerts, and sang classical music. He played at the same concerts, and gave a beautiful rendering of the 'Sonate Pathétique,' and of the 'Symphony in E minor.' This settled his fame. He was *fêted* and invited everywhere. Then

Allen began to drop hints about among his friends, that Mr Darrell had been in the old days a teacher of music. The hints were soon caught up, and promptly acted upon. There was a rage to have young Mr Darrell for music and singing; and one morning Tom received six letters on the subject of lessons, asking whether he had any intention of teaching. He had tossed the letters over to his brother, and after reading them Philip silently handed them back. But after breakfast he advised Tom most earnestly not to lose the chance thus held out to him. So Tom had answered all the letters with a statement that he had no objection, in fact would be happy, to give lessons either in music or singing. He soon had fresh letters begging him to inform the writers of his terms. Wisely he fixed them at a moderate figure, and before the end of the week had begun his lessons to six pupils.

His method was a good one, and as he had a thorough knowledge of the science, his success was immediate. Pupils who had

despaired of learning, made progress with him, the more rapid as it contrasted with their former deficiencies, and outsiders noticed that Mr Darrell's pupils sang not only the music, but the words of their songs equally distinctly and well. He had a peculiar way of teaching a song, for he made his pupils learn the words first, by heart ; then learn the accompaniment, and afterwards he took them carefully through the melody, making them note each inflexion and pause, and finally persuading most of them to sing, not only correctly, but also with expression. He soon found that his pupils were more numerous than he could well attend to, so he raised his fees, and instituted a class-room in the market-place, where his least important pupils met him on certain days of the week. Altogether there was prospect of a golden harvest, easy to reap. Tom liked his new employment, for it left him fully master of himself, and he found that he was able to put some money by. The success of his teaching raised his dormant vanity, and every time a pupil of his sang at

a concert, there was no one who listened with more pleasure than the teacher did, or who was more ready to make any proper sacrifice to help him. And it was another peculiarity noticed in his pupils, that when two of them sang the same song, they did not render it each exactly as the other did, but sang it with the inflexions of expression that came from their characters—perhaps thereby doing justice to many a composer; for often are there subtleties of expression in songs that do not show unless touching a corresponding chord in the singer.

But through all this success and pleased vanity, there rankled a never-closing wound. Tom wrote many times to London, to Sophy McCleak, but had waited vainly for answers to his yearning and loving letters. He writhed under this the more that his letters were never returned through the Dead Letter Office with the mark, 'Not known at this address.' Consequently he was certain that they must reach their destination. Now and then he fancied that all this was in con-

sequence of his follies and his last crime at Allerton's, and he almost believed that his punishment would consist in this downfall of his cherished hopes. But these ideas soon passed and faded into dimness when he remembered that all those actions were passed into the *limbo* of his forgotten life, and that his present prosperity was a distinct proof that what he had done in those days was folly, not crime.

He was never tired of waiting for his letter, the letter from Sophy that was so long in coming, and that perhaps when it does come will strike a hard blow to his heart, and crush out of it the few remaining germs of good. For once in his life Tom thought more of another, loved another more than himself, and if his love was a little selfish notwithstanding, yet it had a genuineness that marked few actions of his life. So he wrote nearly every week a long loving letter to Sophy, and waited day after day for the letter that never came.

His own pre-occupation hid from him a

grief that every day was growing stronger and deeper at his side. Adèle was pining in regret for the pleasant hours that were swiftly passing away, and that threatened never to return.

She missed Tom very much, and missed him each day the more his engagements increased. Sometimes she shuddered to find how mean her life had become without him. The brightness left the little house when Tom left in the morning to give his daily lessons.

For a time she still enjoyed his merry songs and gay talk in the evening, but gradually, as his engagements increased, even this pleasure was lost, for Tom went out every night either to give lessons or to some party, which he charmed as he had charmed Adèle.

And Philip was so dull in comparison! And, poor fellow, he came in so tired always from his day's work, that he seldom cared to do anything more than sit quietly in his chair and read. He was always ready, and indeed loved to read aloud to Adèle, but his ter-

rible hesitancy of speech spoiled all he read, and besides, Adèle cared very little for the books that held Philip entranced over their pages.

He never grew weary of *Candide*, and *L'homme aux quarante écus*, and had often read aloud to Adèle scraps from *Voltaire's Dialogues*. How often did he read and ponder over the *Diner du Comte de Boulainvilliers*, and how penetrated he had become with the glorious words of Epictetus. Poor Adèle did not care for this, and many a time Philip, seeing her wearied inattention, abruptly ceased his reading, and continued his book in silence. Adèle was even more dull now when the Heyson girls came to see her, with Mr and Mrs H. She felt somehow that a barrier, intangible and incomprehensible even to herself, had slowly risen between them and her. She sang her songs listlessly, and paid but little attention to others when they sang.

Allen Heyson came very often still, but she had learned to dislike him. Why? it would have been impossible to say. Perhaps she

had heard that it was through his recommendations that Tom got his pupils. Perhaps she vaguely felt that Allen loved her and watched over her, and she resented his constancy as personal injury. She could not understand her own feelings; sometimes she fancied that she did, but hastened to stifle the burning thoughts that flashed through her brain and caused her face and neck to flush with shame. And even Philip was becoming disagreeable to her, he whom she had given her young heart to in an impulsive moment. Adèle was still French, spite of her English education and her long sojourn in England; and she had come to look upon her marriage with Philip as simply a *mariage de convenance*.

Tom's detestable sophistry and scorn of all the noble traits of humanity had fallen on a virgin soil and borne terrible fruit. Tom had insensibly accustomed her to look upon heroism as the madness of a moment, upon love as a passing passion, and upon truth as a something occasionally useful as a cloak to hypocrisy. Adèle contrasted Philip's tender-

ness and unchanging deference in the time before their marriage with his present dulness and occasional fits of temper. She chafed under restraint as a dog drags at the chain that keeps it near its kennel. And she welcomed the inevitable conclusion these thoughts led to as a pure truth, and so considered Philip's love as a passing passion, and his truthfulness the mere cloak to a long dissimulation. She did not or would not understand that it is only right that the wooer should obey and the husband command. She closed her eyes to the fact that Philip worked so hard all day and so often also through the night.

She chose to look upon his fatigue and consequent desire for rest whenever he could get it as indifference to her, and she sometimes pleased herself with endeavours to rouse him into activity and cheerfulness, that only made him angry and fretful.

Allen Heyson noticed time after time how different Adèle was when Tom passed the evening at home, and he would grind his

teeth with rage to see how blind Philip was to all this. Even he hardly understood Philip Darrell. He could not divine that Philip's calmness proceeded from the brave faith he had in his wife, and from his own utter incapacity for conceiving any man capable of being his brother and his enemy all in one. For with all the experience he had of men, Philip was still as a child among them. The easiest to deceive in matters relating to himself, the calmest to bear misfortune that he could feel was undeserved. And besides, Tom, as we have seen, had never yet attempted to deceive Adèle. The thought had not entered his mind. He knew perfectly well that Adèle was pleased to be with him, and he liked to talk to a woman who appreciated his sarcasms and applauded his scornful contempt for his fellow-men. He had even at first felt bored when he went out to his lessons; but this feeling had worn off very quickly when his success became certain and his popularity grew so great. There were so many people longing for his company at their tables and

parties that he gradually forgot Adèle, or perhaps thought that she would be all right whether he was there or not. So he did not refuse the invitations that poured in upon him; but constant to the maxim of his life, enjoyed himself to the utmost.

Yet Adèle missed him and yearned for his presence with a terrible yearning. She had one foot on the slippery road, and was ready to glide down its smooth treacherous declivity of Sin, provided Tom would go with her—albeit her own feelings were such as we have shown above—the full depth of the evil that might result was hidden from her. She did not look upon this contemplated dereliction from duty as a sin; to her eyes, veiled with the sophistries and unbelief of her conversations with Tom, these thoughts shaped themselves simply into pleasant fancies; and very probably had Tom at this time asked her to love him, she would have recoiled with horror from his proposal.

As to Philip, he was not changed in the least. His loving courtesy and tender manner

were always the same. Adèle was his darling more than ever, and his love was only the deeper and stronger for his silence about it. He worked as hard as he did simply for Adèle's sake, and for her again forbore his simple pleasures that he might have rest enough to go on working. He gloried in his work and loved it, for he was successful, and had obtained already many patients exclusively his own, and could look forward now to the chance of having a fine practice in some years' time. He said nothing to Adèle of the many rebuffs he received; of the insults and contemptuous treatment he had to endure from some of Mr Griffith's rich patients, although, poor fellow, he often boiled with anger over them! Adèle mistook this loving delicate kindness for indifference; she complained to herself bitterly sometimes that Philip never told her anything about his affairs now. Why should he? Since he had nothing but struggles to speak of, and difficulties that often seemed greater than he could overcome. Philip kept all this to him-

self, and bore it with a pinched heart and a brave confident smile on his face, to hide his suffering from his wife. And it was this pent-up suffering, unfortunately, that sometimes helped to inflame his anger when he noticed some extravagance or want of due caution on Adèle's part as to the household expenses. These little scenes over the weekly bills caused many a pang to them both. Philip felt that it was his duty to tell Adèle how much they could afford to spend every week, and to insist that no more than the proper amount should be spent. He had given up his claret and sherry, and drank water, as he could not drink beer, on account of the extra expense the wine put them to. He seldom smoked for the same reason. Adèle could not be made to understand these essentials of good house-keeping, to confine your expenses within your income, and resented Philip's words of remonstrance more and more.

Philip was pleased to see his brother at work and so successful. He enjoyed his

gaiety and splendid flow of fun as much as anybody did. But one day he saw all this gaiety vanish, and the fun change to biting sarcasm and scorn ; for that day Tom received a bulky letter from Dr Renhard. He tore it open and found therein a short note from the Doctor, saying that he had received the enclosed letters, and had, as requested by Miss Sophia McCleak, forwarded them to him, as she was ignorant of his address. Tom left the room with the enclosures. In his bedroom he tore open the letters. A short note from Sophy fell on the bed, together with all his letters to her—*unopened*. Tom read the note, and groaned aloud. It contained these words only :—

‘ Miss Sophy McCleak begs to return Mr Darrell’s letters, and to request that all further correspondence between them shall cease. Miss McCleak has been warned by her friends against any further intimacy with Mr Darrell.

‘ Nice, January 12th, 18— ’

Tom dropped the letter and the envelope, and as he did so a ring fell out of it and rolled away on the floor, reached the wainscot, trinkled against it, and fell flat on the carpet. Tom was on the bed, his face buried in his hands, groaning in utter misery of heart. Presently he sat up, and his eyes were red with tears, and for a few moments he did not move; but soon he dashed the tears from his eyes and sprang off the bed, and gathering up his letters and Sophy's note threw them into the fireplace, and lighting a match set fire to them, and grimly watched them burn away to black ash. As he turned from the fire he saw the ring against the wainscot; he stooped and picked it up—it was the engagement-ring he had given her. He laughed a terrible laugh, and thrust it on to his little finger. Then he went to his wash-stand and sluiced his face with cold water; but he could not wash the redness from his eyes. And soon afterwards he went down-stairs. He met Adèle in the passage, who looked sadly at him, saw the

signs of grief, and turned her eyes away from his face.

Philip had left for his usual round. That evening Tom spent at home, and Adèle showed her great delight by the many little things she did to soothe him and cheer him. Philip was glad to see him quiet and restrained. When they bade each other good-night, Adèle kissed Tom so warmly, that he wondered at it; but ceased to wonder when he saw her flushed eager face. And a light came to him at that very moment. Some devil's torch had thrown its glare deep into Adèle's soul, and Tom Darrell guessed that she loved him. She, his brother's wife! Philip's darling!

When he went up to bed that night he pondered over it, and laughed to himself. In the morning he returned Adèle's kiss somewhat coldly, and noticed the sadness that came over her at the moment. And a fiendish joy took possession of him. He said to himself, perhaps, 'I have tried to love honestly

and fairly, and the girl I love has spurned me from her, for all my soft wooing. And now, why should I refuse the love that is offered me here?' Faint scruples came from his better self, he dismissed them with light sophistry, and determined that if love disdained him so would he disdain love, and take his pleasure there where it was offered to him.

So gradually Tom spent less time away, and seldom was out during the evening. Adèle showed her pleasure at this plainly enough. Allen Heyson saw it all, and groaned over the failure of his well-laid plan. He felt himself utterly defeated, and now all that was left to him was to watch and wait.

Philip was pleased to see Tom more and more at home, and seemingly becoming less fond of pleasure and excitement; and often gladly forgot his own fatigue and endeavoured to join in the conversation and the songs of Adèle and Tom. He asked his friends the Heysons to come often, for he knew that they were perfectly well aware of his narrow in-

come, and so would not expect more than a simple supper, or a cup of tea and some bread and butter. Allen came gladly, and the friendship between him and Philip grew stronger and purer every day. Allen almost began to understand Philip, and to appreciate his pure nobility of character and his exquisite right-mindedness. Philip saw Adèle through eyes full of trust and fond love, and so perceived nothing that could alarm his sensibility.

Allen, on the contrary, looked through eyes sharpened by the jealousy of a lover, and saw everything. Not a hand-clasp, or a smile, or a whispered word escaped his constant vigilance, and every fond look that passed between Tom and Adèle was like a dagger thrust to Allen's heart. It bled, and never ceased bleeding, over the love he cherished so fondly and so madly.

It was perhaps well ordained and fitly that Allen should suffer all this exquisite torture. It was his due that his love for Adèle, continued after her marriage, should

only bear bitter fruit ; till unconsciously to himself it gradually lost all trace of earthly love, and became a sublime devotion, half to Philip and half to her.

It was all there was left for him now. To love, and yet to love her only as a sister might be loved. To be devoted body and soul, and yet feel as if a constant punishment rewarded his devotion, inasmuch as he was forced to keep it hidden and to play the spy. Who can tell what Allen Heyson suffered? Who can imagine and understand the loyal heart, brimming over with passionate love, yet full always of pure respect ; boundless in its devotion, ceaseless in watchfulness !

Few, thank God, can ever live and suffer as he did—every thought almost a sin, every action pure and manly.

Such was Allen Heyson at this period of our story.

CHAPTER II.

THE DETECTIVE BAFFLED—MRS WRIGHT SEEKS A CLUE TO HER HUSBAND'S HIDING-PLACE—SHE MEETS MR ALLERTON, AND TELLS HIM HER STORY—THE RESULTS—MR ALLERTON TALKS ABOUT IT WITH DR RENHARD—THE DETECTIVE CALLS ON DR RENHARD—THE CHAIN LINKS FORGED VERY RAPIDLY NOW.

WHEN the Detective recovered from the stunning blow John Wright dealt him in Little Ryder Street he did not feel much inclination to follow up the pursuit of so determined a fellow. At least he deferred it till he should have a chance of taking John Wright unawares, and between two fires. Nevertheless he thought it his duty to set on foot an inquiry after the fugitive, and accordingly fresh placards were printed and sent round London, with a full description of the criminal. But nothing came of them, and

the little Detective felt completely baffled. He was only a mortal after all, with all human failings, although he was connected with Scotland Yard. And also, unlike many of the detectives we read of in fiction, he could neither make himself invisible, nor be in two places at once. Neither had he eyes like a hawk's, nor the power of scent of a jackal, consequently the knock-down blow from John Wright's fist had rather bewildered him, and feeding time being near, our worthy went to his tea at a coffee-house near, in Berry Street, and thought deeply over the matter. He was thoroughly puzzled! He had been unable to obtain any information of the direction John Wright had taken. So after his tea he quietly walked home, and slept as soundly that night as could be expected. He renewed his inquiries the next day and all through the ensuing week, but without obtaining any further clue. Then he left the matter to take its chance, and bade Mrs Wright, who had nothing else to do, follow the thing up as best she could. But in London she found herself

quite at fault. For the first few days she haunted Holborn in a vague hope that her husband would come back. Then she ferreted out some of his friends, and besought their help as to his probable haunt. In this she wasted a week without discovering anything. At last she found a friend among those who had known John Wright. This man took her home with him and bade his wife take care of her. All this time Mrs Wright had never once thought of seeking out Tom Darrell again at Mr Allerton's. So the weeks and months slipped by without any definite result. But one day she saw a face in Cheapside that she remembered. She ran across the road, and soon came up with the man, and followed him till he stopped at a place she recollected well. It was Mr Allerton going to business. Mrs Wright groaned that she had never thought once of this. And just as she was despairing of ever finding any clue to her husband, this kind man crossed her path. She had seen the Detective many times since that day in Holborn, and knew that he had

some placards printed. But she fancied nothing had come of them. And now she hesitated, she felt so miserably poor, so common, so low, beside the finely dressed merchant. She had thought herself so strong when she came to London, and had put such trust in her own cunning! Never thinking perhaps that she was only one of the instruments used to bring about God's justice.

Gathering a little strength from her despair she touched Mr Allerton's arm, as he was about to enter the counting-house.

'What do you want, ma'am?' said he.

'I want to speak to you, sir. Didn't a Mr Darrell work for you once?' she asked, speaking eagerly.

'Yes, he did,' cried Mr Allerton. 'But he is not here now; he has left my employment. What do you want with him?'

'I want to find him, so as to find John Wright,' said she.

'Hum! Come in here a bit, ma'am. You make me curious over this affair.'

Together they went into the office, and into Mr Allerton's private room.

'Now tell me how finding Mr Darrell will help you to find John Wright, whoever he may be?'

'Mr Darrell took our little girl, Katie, away from us, and I think my husband John Wright follows him to kill him.'

'Damme, you don't say so. Tell me all about this matter. Damme, what a rogue—what a scamp.'

So Mrs Wright, as far as she could, told the dismal story of Katie and Tom Darrell, and described what had been described to her of her husband rocking to and fro on the grass in Shirley Wood; and how he had come home covered with blood, and without Kate, and how he had gone away the same night, and Katie had never been seen since by her. Mr Allerton heard this dismal tale shuddering with horror, and many a time he damned himself vigorously, and Tom as a scoundrel.

He was thoroughly puzzled, also, what to do in the matter. He knew perfectly well where Tom was, and was possibly afraid he should be doing wrong by letting loose this violent woman on him at Maidstone. Besides, he highly esteemed Philip Darrell, and could not but feel that such a scandal would operate very badly against his prospects. So he allowed Mrs Wright to finish her story, and told her that he would endeavour to do all he could for her, and asking her to give him her address, informed her that as soon as he heard anything again of Tom Darrell he would send word to her.

As soon as she had left his office with this promise, Mr Allerton sat down and wrote a long letter, which he carefully sealed and directed to

Mrs McCleak,
28, *Rue des Alpes,*
Nice,
Alpes Maritimes,
France.

This he sent into the office, with orders

for it to be posted by that morning's mail. Then he went about his usual work, but felt worried and fidgetty, and could settle to nothing. He was constantly thinking of young Darrell's villainy, and quite puzzled as to the best course to pursue. As soon as the day was finished, he jumped into a cab and went to Dr Renhard's. He found his son John there, and had to wait for the Doctor some twenty minutes.

During this time he amused himself with watching his son and Fanny Renhard, congratulating himself inwardly on the good match his boy was about to make. He was always boasting of his own rise from nothing, but would have killed almost any of his boys who should dare to do the same. For he was no longer a Nothing—he had made plenty of money, and was therefore a Somebody.

Certainly John Allerton showed himself very devoted to Fanny, and now it was all arranged and definitely settled that they were soon to be married, she made no secret of her

great love for him. She in consequence, I have been told, fought all her sisters, and with her mother's help defeated them utterly, and so kept her beloved John entirely to herself.

As soon as the Doctor came in, he and Mr Allerton shut themselves up in the consulting-room—and Dr Renhard listened to the story Allerton had to tell. The worthy Doctor had seen much of seduction in the course of his professional life, having often attended Misses A. B. or C.—who for the nonce would call themselves Mrs Aldrich, or Mrs Bannister, or Mrs Colquhoun—and the Doctor asked few questions, for he usually got very good fees on these occasions. Consequently he listened with great placidity, and astonished Mr Allerton by not being surprised in the least.

He could well believe all this of young Darrell, he had always been a scamp—although he had certainly never before known him commit such bad actions. When Mr Allerton told him about the £15, and the £70, and how

Philip had paid the £15, and offered to pay the £70, the Doctor simply remarked that Philip Darrell was a fool in money matters, and only had the courage to deny himself what was necessary in order to give it to some one else. What was the best that could be done in the case? Oh, leave it alone, have nothing to do with it! Let the fellow go to the devil his own way, and if this woman wanted him, why let her go and find him. Did Allerton know where Tom was living? Oh yes; with his brother.

‘Ah, that was just like Philip,’ said the Doctor. ‘Tom will seduce his wife next if he has nothing else to do. Philip is quite a child, as easy to deceive as a baby, and as forgiving [after an injury as the *Bon Dieu* is represented to be.’

‘A great pity!’

‘Of course it’s a great pity! Anything of the kind would utterly ruin Philip’s prospects.’

Altogether the Doctor and Mr Allerton came to the conclusion that it was best

to leave things as they were, and not to interfere in the least, lest they should cause some trouble for which they would be sorry afterwards. And in this wise they settled the matter between them.

I don't think they enjoyed their dinner any the less after this conversation, and I feel bound to say I should think them very foolish if they had suffered such a subject to trouble their good digestion.

During the day our friend the worthy Detective had reported himself at Scotland Yard, and had advised the printing and dissemination of fresh placards, offering a reward for any information that would lead to the apprehension of John Wright. These as we have already noted were duly printed and pasted up around London. And the next thing our Detective did was to set out to find Mrs Wright. This was easy, as near the Seigerts' shop in Holborn he soon came upon a pal of the man who had offered a temporary home to her. There he went and found them at their mid-day meal, and waited till they had

finished, when he had a long talk with Mrs Wright, and by his searching questions brought out the relations that had existed between the murdered Katie and Tom Darrell. He learned easily enough that Tom had been employed at Mr Allerton's in Cheapside. After he had done with Mrs Wright, the Detective made his way to Cheapside and sought Mr Allerton. He was too late. Would he leave his address and name? Oh! he had no objection. His name was Joseph Fairtree, employed at Scotland Yard. Could he call the next day? Certainly he could, about half-past eleven a.m. sharp.

By Mrs Wright the little Detective had allowed himself to be convinced that wherever Tom Darrell was to be found, John Wright would surely be near; and with these ideas in his straightforward little head Joseph Fairtree made his promised visit to Mr Allerton the next day, at half-past eleven a.m. sharp. Sharp, be it noted, here means 'exact.'

Mr Allerton was in—was very gracious to the Detective, and as he could not deny

that Tom Darrell had been in his employment, he owned it with a good grace ; but to the other questions the Detective put to him he gave no answers, utterly declining to give any. At last in despair the Detective begged him to give him his address. No ! he could do nothing of the kind. But somehow by dint of questioning and half-guesses he managed to find out that Tom had a brother ; but that was all. No further information could the Detective get out of Mr Allerton. So he bade him good day, and as an odd idea came into his head,—he said afterwards that it was a flash of inspiration,—he walked back to the place where Mrs Wright was staying and asked her to walk with him up Holborn. And he and Mrs Wright walked together up Holborn, and as they walked Mr Fairtree communicated his idea to the acute woman, who grasped it and made it her own almost by several sensible additions to the original. Presently Mrs Wright stopped and pointed to where a wall dipped and formed an angle, and said—

‘That’s the place where John Wright was leaning when I found him.’

‘Ah! and what was he doing, ma’am, at the moment?’ asked the Detective.

‘He was staring straight before him, across the road,’ said Mrs Wright. The Detective nodded joyfully, and instantly fixed his body into the angle of wall and looked straight away across the road. The shop exactly opposite to him was Seigert’s the baker’s.

‘We’ll try it on, ma’am,’ cried the Detective; and they crossed the road together. Mrs Wright walked into the shop, rapped on the counter with her knuckles, and brought a pale, weary-looking woman from the back room. How different to the Mrs Seigert we knew some time ago.

The woman asked her what she wanted.

‘I want to ask you about Katie Wright,’ said the mother.

The woman stared at her with a look of blank astonishment in her face. At last she

said, 'I've never heard of such a person, ma'am.'

'Oh!' said Mrs Wright. She called the Detective in. 'The lady tells me she never heard of Katie Wright,' said she.

'Sorry to hear that!' said Mr Fairtree. 'But have you ever noticed a man standing over the way by the wall, watching this shop?'

'Many a time, sir,' said the woman. 'He's been here a long time. Why, he was there before we took the shop of Mr Seigert.'

'Ha! How long have you been here, mum?' asked Mr Fairtree.

'We took the shop three weeks ago, sir,' said she.

'What has become of the other people, do you know?' asked Mr Fairtree.

'Oh, they were sold up, sir, or at least they had a sale here just after we took the shop. I'm afraid they're gone to the bad. Mrs Seigert was a very spendful woman, I've been told.'

Here the Detective told the woman what his object was in asking her the questions

above, and in return for his confidence she proceeded to give him a detailed account of the poor Seigerts. How they never could stop spending money, and were always giving shelter and food to common people; in fact, how the foolish couple had ruined themselves in helping others. Oh! It was the old story; indiscriminate benevolence, money flung right and left, given to the deserving and the undeserving alike. One of the neighbours, our old friend the virtuous mother of many children, who often had profited by Mrs Seigert's kindness, came in and added her voice to that of the baker-woman; then such a foul torrent of abuse was let loose upon the worthy couple as would have sickened an honest man to listen to, even if the blame so freely bestowed had been thoroughly deserved. Whereas the fact was that Mrs Seigert had offended this woman deeply by telling her she could not help her one time to pay her rent, after she had fed the family for two weeks with bread without ever charging them a penny.

The Detective managed to ascertain from this person that there had been a young girl, a common creature she called her, who had fallen ill at Mrs Seigert's and whom they had taken care of. She didn't know the creature's name; had never even seen her. She had often seen John Wright (she did not call him by his name) watching the place. She had seen him follow a cab that came with a gentleman to take the young girl away from Mrs Seigert's. Had seen him again the next day and ever since till lately.

'Did you know what Doctor attended the young girl?' asked Mr Fairtree.

'Oh, yes. It was a gentleman from Dr Renhard's; I think his name was Darrell.'

Further, she told them that Dr Renhard lived in — Square. Seeing that he could get no further information from these people, and having failed to ascertain where the Seigerts had gone to, Mr Fairtree thanked them, and betook himself with Mrs Wright to find Dr Renhard. He was in, luckily, and saw Mr Fairtree at once.

‘ I have come, sir, on legal business.’

The Doctor bowed. Mr Fairtree explained his business.

‘ And I wish to ask you if you know a Dr Darrell.’

‘ I do not know any *Doctor* Darrell,’ replied Dr Renhard.

‘ Indeed, sir!’ cried the Detective; ‘ but I have been told that he was your assistant.’

‘ Yes! *Mr* Philip Darrell, surgeon, was my assistant, but he left me about six months ago.’

‘ Then, sir, can you oblige me with his address?’

‘ Willingly, if for a proper purpose,’ replied the Doctor.

Joseph Fairtree thought honesty might be the best policy, so frankly told the Doctor the reasons he had for wishing to find out Philip Darrell.

‘ And who are you?’ asked the Doctor.

‘ My name is Joseph Fairtree, one of the Scotland Yard detectives.’

‘ Oh!’ said the Doctor, and reflected a

minute. Then gave the Detective Philip Darrell's address at Maidstone.

The worthy Fairtree thanked him for his kindness and took his leave with Mrs Wright. The next morning he went quietly to the Yard and made his report to his superiors. As he was making it a man came in who gave information about John Wright. The man came from the Old Kent Road, and said that a man answering to the description on the placards had asked him for work some months before. His description of John Wright tallied with that of the placards of course. Fairtree went back with the man to the Old Kent Road, and found that he had told the truth. So he was rewarded.

Somehow this piece of information made Mr Fairtree so eager to follow up the track that he completely forgot Philip's address; unlike the novelist's accomplished detective, Mr Fairtree was now and then forgetful. The worthy fellow had quite forgotten at the time to make a note of the address Dr Renhard gave him. However, he found traces of the

fugitive quick and fast, and the further he went the hotter the scent became. The man had a sensible way of setting about his work, and once he lighted upon a good trail could follow up a criminal as a blood-hound followed the fugitive negroes in the Slave States.

So he went from village to village, and from town to town, through Kent, and at last the trail led him direct to Maidstone. Here again he obtained news of a man in dusty garments, with iron-gray hair, and rugged, determined face. He had asked one or two people for work, but had seemed such a rough, savage fellow that they had been afraid to employ him. But a little further on he lost all trace. John Wright had probably mingled with some crowd, and so passed unnoticed.

The Detective went on, but found no further trace of the man he was seeking. So he came back to Maidstone, and was convinced that John Wright must still be there.

He had brought a bundle of his placards with him, and he sent a man round the town to paste them up all about. He gave full de-

tails to the Maidstone police, and soon every man was on the *qui vive* as to who should find John Wright.

In the evening Joseph Fairtree went for a walk round the town with one of the force in plain clothes, just to ascertain with his own eyes whether the bill-poster had done his work properly.

Not far from Mr Griffith's surgery he noticed an old man reading one of the placards. He sidled up to him, for something in the man's build reminded him of John Wright. He saw an old fellow by the lamp-light, with white hair and a smooth, kind-looking face. The old man looked at him once, but afterwards went on reading the placard. Joseph Fairtree and the policeman walked on. The old man stood watching them, and presently old John, for it was he, turned and walked back to Mr Griffith's, went in, and betook himself to his little house.

Joseph Fairtree communicated his suspicions to the policeman with him, who pro-

mised to hunt the old man up and learn who he was.

Now the chain links are being forged gaily and quick, and the ring of the hammer striking the iron on the Anvil of Heaven's Wrath, drowns the soft sounds of God's Footsteps. He comes with leaden feet, but will strike with iron hands. The next day the Detective returned to London, and sent Mrs Wright down to Maidstone to keep watch and wait for some clue to turn up that would lead to her husband's apprehension.

Meanwhile life was lived as before, and neither friends nor enemies gathered into one city ever dreamt how soon the storm would burst over them.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN WRIGHT RESUMES HIS CEASELESS VIGILS—TOM DARRELL NOTICES THAT A SHADOW IS ALWAYS DOGGING HIS FOOTSTEPS—THE WRAITH OF KATIE WRIGHT—TOM SEES THE PLACARDS—ADÈLE NOTICES HIS EMBARRASSMENT—THE CAST OF THE DICE.

WHEN John Wright rose again that day he had seen Tom Darrell fierce resolves took possession of his heart. All the hatred that he had vainly hoped was quenched welled up again like a surging stream of blood and tinged all his thoughts ruby red. The sight of Tom Darrell, happy, and again loving and perhaps beloved,—for he had seen how Adèle looked up to Tom, even in the brief glance that had shown him his enemy once more,—made all his wrongs come back to him and his vengeance spring up again, armed

and terrible; stript of all the gloss his penitence had vainly tried to throw upon it, it was naked with a fierce savage nudity. His struggles against the hatred that had been the food of his recent life were ended now. He gave himself up to it with a delirious fierceness, and hugged it, and laughed over it like a miserable madman. He fed it anew with his bitter regrets for Katie, and threw on its fire the remorse he felt for Katie's death, which he thought he had caused. One day he had gone out, and seen on a fence a white placard that haunted him day and night. He saw it all round the walls of his room; he shut his eyes, and it forced its black letters under his hot eyelids, and it nearly drove him mad. It was the placard, offering a reward for his apprehension, as the murderer of Katie Wright. He believed himself that his blows in Epping Wood had been badly aimed, and missing Tom Darrell, had fallen on his daughter; he remembered the darkness in the wood, and how he had fled when the blows ceased, and the body had

fallen among the brushwood. He had never dared to look back at the work of his own hands. He had done that crime, and yet had not killed his enemy. So he resumed his old tireless vigil, as far as his work allowed him. And as the winter was very slack time, John Wright had ample opportunity for watching and following Tom. He always kept at a distance, and Tom had never once seen him. Sometimes he followed him to his work, and soon came to know that when he saw him go into one house he would be certain to go on a certain round, and John Wright contented himself with waiting for him, as he returned. Yet all this time he never had one opportunity for his revenge. Tom was seldom out at night, and when he did go out, usually some one was with him, and John Wright did not wish to be punished himself; he wished to punish Tom for the wrong he had worked to Katie. He even, at last, managed to convince himself that it was not he, but Tom, who was guilty of Katie's death, since he could never have struck her, had not she first been led there by

Tom. Thus everything came and fed and justified his desire for revenge. He soon noticed the intimacy springing up between Tom and Adèle, and this gave him a further plea for the swift doing of his deed.

He was again becoming haggard as in the old time, and deep lines furrowed his face, making him look twenty years older than he was. The policemen on their beats once or twice noticed him, and soon began to watch him a little, as his movements appeared somewhat suspicious to them. One man told Tom there was an old fellow who seemed to be watching him, but Tom laughed at the idea.

Truly a great change had come over poor John Wright. Mr Griffith had asked him many a time whether he were ailing, and Mrs Griffith sent him soup and wine, fearing that the poor man was not well fed. The children avoided him now, all but the little fair-haired girl. And this of course he noticed, and grew more savage over it than over anything else. But when little Ettie came to him in pure childish confidence he

would tremble and soften before the delicate creature, and was never tired of listening to its gay artless prattle.

This little child was now the only gleam of moral light that fell athwart his path. To her he owed the only tenderness that remained to him. Little Ettie with her long fair hair and beautiful face was like a good angel to him. While she was looking on at his work or talking to him, his heart would soften, and very often, very often big tears gathered in his eyes. When she went back into the house the demons would fly to him again, and clutch his soul and turn it all to wrath and bitterness. He never struggled against either influence now; he seemed like a log cast on the waters, floating here and there, to and fro, at the mercy of wind and wave. But the bitterness and the darkness prevailed, and every day only served to add one day more to the long reckoning for which he longed to ask the payment.

Meanwhile he but little neglected his usual work; Mr Griffith had no fault to find

with him, and had even become very kind to him. He seemed to understand that his gardener had suffered deeply, and bore his sorrow like a man. Besides this he had noticed how fond little Ettie was of him, and how often the homely gardener had been preferred by her to any one else but her mother.

And truly this was poor John's character. Under his fostering care linnets and thrushes had built many a nest in the garden, or had returned to it after having been absent for many a long day. Sweet Robin-red-breasts, two families of them, had taken refuge in the little out-house place that served for his home; and old John had cut a square hole in the top part of the door to give them free ingress and egress. Many a time had Ettie told her father about the Red-breasts that hopped unconcernedly about on old John's table, pecking and feasting in their merry little way. Notably one, the smallest, perhaps the youngest of the two families, had acquired the post of honour, for it took its

place by the side of John's cup and plate, and was fed right royally from the edge of his platter. It was very pleasant to watch him surrounded by his feathered friends.

All this had been achieved long before Tom's arrival in Maidstone. Since he had seen his daughter's seducer again, poor John had almost forgotten his birds. He saw them hop about and peck boldly at the bread in his hand or the potato on his plate, but without noticing them and whistling to them as had been his wont. He had lost all his buoyancy of spirit, all interest in but one thing—his desire for Vengeance. Little Robin-redbreast seemed to understand something of this, for he would sometimes give a little peck at John's hand, to arouse his attention; or perch himself on his shoulder, and chirrup out a brave little song in his ear. John let his favourite do as it liked, and did not even draw his hand away when it pecked it. And presently the birds were left very much alone, for John could not follow Tom Darrell and attend to them as

well. But he never went out before he had placed crumbs and scraps of cold potatoes for them on the table.

Oh! how miserable his life was. Every thought burnt and seared his heart with the flame of evil. He was feverish and hot, although snow was on the ground and ice over every pond and ditch. And he felt sometimes vaguely the meanness, the worthlessness of his life, the utter uselessness of his revenge. But he never stopped to consider these things, he never listened to the voice that was always calling out to him—‘Reflect! Thy life is full of evil!’ Perhaps, poor wretch, he could not have understood it had he listened ever so well. His moral ear was not finely enough attuned to catch the subtle accents and translate them into words. He was only a poor, ignorant labourer, who hardly could read—who could read printed words, but would look upon written signs as the ordinary man of education looks at Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Little by little Tom Darrell became conscious of the truth of the policeman’s report to

him. Wherever he went a stealthy footfall sounded behind him. He often turned abruptly and sought to discover the man, or woman, or child, to whom the feet could belong. But always in vain. The steps ceased the moment he turned round, and began again as soon as he walked on. Once or twice he had heard these footfalls in the middle of a crowd.

Once for experiment he walked out of the town a little way up a dark lane. The footsteps followed, and as he left the town-lights behind him he heard a harsh, suppressed breathing accompanying the sound of the feet. He had not dared to go far, and had suddenly become so filled with cold horror, that he had turned round, and shutting his eyes, rushed blindly forward as fast as he could run. And at that moment he had dimly caught sight of a black shadow that suddenly crouched and hid its face as he turned to fly. No footsteps had followed him then, or their soft sound had been covered by the clatter of his boots on the

hard road. Then for two days he was only followed for a short time during the day. At last, after a fortnight or three weeks, his pursuer dogged him to a certain point, and there would stop—to return again when he repassed that point later in the day. Once or twice he took another road, avoiding that particular place. The first time this *ruse* succeeded, but the second time it failed, for the sounds followed him all during the day. He became absolutely terrified; and far more than any other reason, this was why he spent his evenings at home. When he went out he never trusted himself to go in the dark alone; he always asked some one to accompany him. And on these occasions he had heard the terrible ghost-like footsteps, pit-pat, pit-pat, following him. It terrified him, and angered him, this silent pursuit. He looked back into his past life to see whether there could be anything there that could return upon him in this manner. But to him there was no action of his for which there could be this retribution. He was superstitious, as all lovers of

pleasure are, and spite of the education he had received, he had often pinned his faith blindly on the nonentity he fondly called his 'Good Star,' or dreaded and loathed that which he called his 'Evil Star.' Tom believed in ghosts, as more virtuous and wiser men than he have done before; and although he would loudly deride the notion in company, yet he would tremble with fear if he had to traverse a lonely road by himself after dark. He felt that the darkness held him in an awful clutch, and he would often run and close his eyes to shut out the horrors that only existed in his diseased imagination.

This is no fancy picture. I once heard Tom Darrell wake in the night and shriek out in agony that the walls of the room were closing in upon him, and in the paroxysm of the moment fling himself madly against the window, crashing his head through a pane of glass in his wild terror at the imaginary peril. Fortunately the blind was down, and so saved his face and neck from being cut.

Perhaps he suffered more at this time

than ever after in his life, suffered torture and writhed under it, and under the utter impotence he felt to rid himself of it.

Oh ! who can say that sin is not punished during this present life-time ? Tom Darrell scorned the idea that there could be a Hell after Death. And now he was reaping the bitter harvest he had sowed. He was feeling every minute that God's laws punish their infraction by their own inexorable course. The crime that causes misery to man has its punishment strangely brought about by the very community it wronged.

If ever man suffered the tortures of Hell, that man was Tom Darrell. His enemy was always present, vague, terrible, remorseless, and indefatigable ! Every sound he heard made him tremble from head to foot. In imagination he caught the sound of the stealthy footsteps when the outward ear had ceased to distinguish it.

And he had conjured up a horrible phantom that never left him after he had heard the silent pursuer always dogging his heels.

In very despair, after the receipt of Sophy's letter, returning him his ring and all his letters to her, unopened, Tom had thrown himself madly into anything that promised him excitement and interest sufficient to drown the terrible thoughts that were always oppressing him. And at this moment Adèle's look of love had revealed her heart to him; and forgetting all Philip's brave kindness to him, forgetting Adèle's purity, forgetting all in his egotism, he threw himself upon the stream of her love, hoping to float thereon far from the sound of the haunting footsteps.

One evening, just after the lamps in the streets had been lit, and they were still thronged with people, Tom Darrell was walking home from his last pupil's. Suddenly he came to where a small crowd had collected, and were busily examining something white pasted on a wall. At that moment a young girl stopped in front of Tom, just as he was about to step across the road to see what the crowd had collected for. Tom stopped, looked at

the girl, who was dark and moderately tall, and he uttered a cry and said—

‘Katie Wright.’

Then he turned and rushed away up the street, trembling like a leaf. He knew that Katie Wright drowned herself, or was found drowned, in Epping Wood. Although Philip had never told him, he knew that Philip had heard of it. And now here, in a Maidstone street, he saw her again. In a moment he remembered the footsteps that had been pursuing him for weeks, and he instantly was convinced that Katie’s spirit followed him from the grave. The young girl he had seen and recognized was *not* Katie Wright. The likeness was great certainly, for I myself saw the same girl in court when John Wright was tried at Maidstone Assizes for the murder of his daughter.

To Tom, however, this glance acted like a revelation. In one sweep of thought he saw Katie Wright again, and fancied that although dead, she could appear to him as she had been

when alive. At least this is how his imagination twisted this simple incident, and dwelling upon it, became convinced that it must be true. His terror can be easily imagined, when just as he neared the top of the street where Philip's house was, the footsteps that had haunted him came after him again as clearly as before.

He did not dare look back, and as he was out of breath he could not run, so was forced to *walk* to the house with those dreadful sounds following him.

He was so white and ill when he went in that Philip asked what was the matter, and made him have some hot brandy-and-water. Adèle mixed it and brought it to him—and looked on anxiously as he drank. The terror expressed in his face was piteous to see.

Philip, who knew his strange superstitious nature, forbore to question him about it, as after the brandy-and-water Tom was all right again, and soon engaged in a game of backgammon with Adèle.

As he grew interested in the game the

pallor slowly left his cheek, his natural colour returned, and he soon looked as if nothing had happened to him.

Adèle thought him different from his usual self. In very truth he was so, for he was thinking deeply over his past life, and dragging all his past deeds in review before him. All the evening he was going on with this mental process, and went to bed and to sleep without having solved the puzzling problem. His mind had become warped from the constant sophistry of his daily speech, and it was impossible for him to take a right and just view of his evil deeds, since he could not bring his mind to consider them as crimes or even as peccadilloes; he could only consider whether he had derived any good from them. And to this he had half found the answer, which was that his pleasures had cost him a good deal of money, a great deal of time, and there was nothing tangible to show for them. He left out of his calculations the disagreeable footsteps that seemed always to pursue him, for the brandy had helped to make him

partly forget them and partly think of them as unconnected with his past life ; whereas, as we know, it was just out of that life that the phantom came.

The next morning Adèle, having some purchases to make, asked Tom to walk with her part of the way. Of course he readily consented, and together they walked up the town. Here and there they noticed little knots of people collected before placards pasted on the walls, or on boardings, or on fences, anywhere that a placard could be pasted. A little further on, past one of these groups, Adèle noticed a placard on the wall, with no one reading it, probably because it was so near the others. As her curiosity was excited she instantly proposed to Tom to go over the road to look at it. Something inexplicable made Tom hold back in hesitation for a moment. ‘Why won’t you go?’ cried Adèle.

‘It may be some murder committed, and perhaps there are all sorts of horrid details on that paper,’ said Tom.

‘Nonsense!’ cried Adèle. ‘I shouldn’t

mind if there are, so come and show it to me.'

Unable to refuse without seeming churlish, Tom took her across the street to read the placard. It was our familiar friend; and offered £100 reward for the apprehension of John Wright, charged with the murder of his daughter, Katie Wright, at Shirley, in the wood between the gravel-pits and the village. And £25 reward for information leading to his apprehension and conviction. It gave a description of the criminal, and Tom read it out with a beating heart.

Adèle was watching his face, for she could feel that he trembled from head to foot. Yes, he was trembling and aghast at the terrible crop that was springing up from wild oats sown by him. He could have torn down the lying placard, for he well knew that John Wright could not have killed his daughter in Shirley Wood, since he had seen her in London, and taken her to Leyton. A whole host of conflicting thoughts surged up in his heart, and when he tried to move away from

the fatal placard he tottered and nearly fell. Adèle had to help him into a shop, where he was able to sit down and rest awhile.

Adèle vaguely remembered something about this Katie Wright, but the thing had become blurred and indistinct. So much had happened since Philip wrote her that letter from Leyton, that Mme De Brenne tore up directly Adèle had read it. But she felt that it had something to do with the agitation Tom showed, and she longed to ask him to tell her the cause of his sudden attack of faintness. However, she said nothing, and soon after Tom left her at the shop where she wished to make her purchases.

No sooner had he turned a corner of the street than he entered an inn and called for some brandy. They brought him a decanter and a tumbler and water. He poured half a tumblerful of brandy from the decanter, added a little water, and swallowed the whole at one gulp; then flung half a crown on the table and walked out. He felt better, and with this factitious aid managed to get

through his morning lessons as usual, without breaking down. But all the time his brain was on fire, and now and then he shivered and felt chilled. When his lessons were finished he walked back to Philip's and dined there, instead of dining as usual in the town at the 'Roebuck.' He wanted to be near Adèle. He was afraid to be alone even in a crowd, for he felt that he would have heard the strange footsteps, and perhaps have met again the Wraith of Katie Wright.

Philip was at a 'labour,' so could not get back to dinner, and Tom and Adèle were alone during the meal. Tom tried to laugh and be merry, but broke down in the attempt. Adèle said very little all dinner-time, and Tom was glad when the dismal meal came to an end. Directly afterwards he set out again to give his afternoon lessons.

John Wright was waiting at his usual place, and as Tom passed him, he followed him, and Tom turned round at the noise he made. Somehow all that afternoon Tom saw John Wright, whom he only knew as Mr

Griffith's gardener, always near the houses he went to. It seemed a little strange to him, but he set it down to an odd coincidence. In the evening as usual he walked home, and John Wright kept in front of him almost the entire way. Tom amused himself with noting the old man's peculiar walk—it was a kind of heavy stamp and a shuffling movement of the feet at the same time—a very odd style of walk, and Tom could not tell which sounded first, the noisy stamp or the shuffling sound. Somehow he fancied he had heard the peculiarity of the walk before; and he endeavoured, but in vain, to remember when and where it was. By the time he had brushed his hair, and washed his hands for tea, he had quite forgotten all about old John and his peculiar walk, and had even shaken off the dulness and fear that had all day oppressed him; at least since the moment he had read the placard with Adèle. And during tea-time he was really merry again, and Philip and Adèle caught the contagion.

of his joyous laughter, and quip, and joke, and pun flew about in profusion.

Philip especially was joyous, for his affairs were going on famously. Mr Griffith liked him, and respected him very much, and had no hesitation now to send him to his most fastidious patients; for every one in Maidstone spoke well of Philip. Rich and poor alike praised him, and the poor absolutely loved the young doctor. Children ran after him, and shouted to him joyously as he walked in the street. Many a little ragged urchin's eyes beamed with grateful recognition—grateful for a supper or a dinner that Philip's liberality had given them. His own practice, too, was creeping up slowly, but surely, and meanwhile Philip felt that he had no need to hurry, since one day he would be certain to succeed to Mr Griffith. And lately, too, as his prospects grew brighter, Philip had thrown off much of his reserved manner, and laughed more frequently and with greater *abandon* than ever he had before.

He was like a man pressing the juice from a *Lachryma Christi* grape on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius, whilst the mountain rumbles and groans beneath him, as he enjoys the luscious fruit. Philip's merriment would have seemed as fool-hardy as that man's careless enjoyment, had the reality been revealed in all its terrible danger.

Adèle, who had seen Tom's strange terror in the morning, inwardly wondered to see him so gay and *insouciant*, so totally changed. But she fancied several times during the evening that his merriment was forced and unnatural. And he spoke so bitterly of everything with a biting irony, so tinged with humour, that the very sarcasms he uttered made them laugh. In truth, Tom Darrell was changed. All in a single day he lived his past over again—searched it, and searched it vainly, for some guidance for the future. Now his gaiety had arisen from the fact of his having come to a conclusion worthy of his gambling propensities.

He had decided to test the right and

wrong of his past deeds by a throw of the dice. He had decided to place Adèle's honour, Philip's happiness, his own soul on the hazard of two ivory cubes.

It may seem incredible, but all this is only too true. It was the natural outcome of the sophistry by which he had glossed over his misdeeds ; that had gradually led him to look upon all human life as ordered and pre-ordained by Fate.

It was a comfortable doctrine, for it absolved him, in his own opinion, from all guilt. How indeed can there be guilt without free-will? How can there be free-will when everything that happens in life is pre-ordained by a Remorseless Fatality, blind, unswerving, inexorable? Oh ! it was a brave doctrine, and he held this belief perhaps half unconsciously ; it helped besides to excuse his own deeds. Yet, as his idea of Fate was only half defined, he held strongly also to a vague faith in the power of Chance, as one of the arbiters of human destinies. But it is so difficult to decipher Tom Darrell's character, that his

thoughts and ideas are almost beyond our ken. His actions seemed to proceed and be in part justified by some code of reasoning or faith such as I have tried to sketch, and it is presumable that he was really actuated by some such system of thought.

At any rate, after bidding Philip and Adèle good-night, Tom Darrell went up-stairs to his own room with a pair of new dice in his pocket. He locked his door as a preliminary precaution, and took the dice from his waistcoat. There is something horribly grotesque in this incident of Tom Darrell's life—he who had always been so confident of his own strength, so boastful of his talents for working round difficulties and dangers, had virtually renounced the creed that he had declared his own by so many and such loud assertions.

Perhaps he may have felt some remorse at what he contemplated, and may have hesitated a little before resolving to temporize no longer with his lustful passion for Adèle. He may have felt unnerved whenever he endeavoured to pass this Rubicon without the justification of a

firm conviction that what he was doing was right. From this indecision his thoughts had all at once veered round to his belief in Chance. If Chance could order or arrange one part of life why could it not do the same in another case, affecting only a single incident? And what easier method could there be of testing the right or wrong of his past and present actions than by a few throws of the dice? So that to this conclusion his mind had leapt and he clung to it tenaciously, for it served, or might serve, his lust, and would satisfy his scruples of conscience at the same time. We have described Tom very badly if the reader does not see at once that all this is a simple and logical sequence to his character.

However that may be, Tom had made up his mind. He threw the dice nine times and set down the numbers each time. When he had finished he read them over and seemed satisfied with the result. Probably he had formed some theory of figures, like the mysterious lettered Abracadabra. At all events he was persuaded now that he had arrived at a

proper solution. For as his throws of the dice gave as their meaning that his fate was interwoven with Adèle's, it followed that whatever should happen would be without any wish or will on his or her part, and consequently must be quite beyond their control.

It is difficult to read this with seriousness—the whole project was so thoroughly mad and absurd. There was only one thing really and correctly proved by these nine throws of the dice. They convinced Tom that all henceforth was beyond his control.

It was indeed so. The links of the chain were fitted one by one, each to its fellow-link. The march of events proceeded on to the definite goal that should indeed prove for ever to Tom Darrell that those who sow must reap; that he who sows evil, inevitably will reap evil in an abundant harvest.

And he slept peaceably, and woke the next morning resolved to float on the stream henceforth, wherever it might lead him. And Adèle's love was the stream on which he meant to float.

CHAPTER IV.

GREAT REJOICINGS IN——SQUARE—ALL THE PARISH IS INTERESTED IN FANNY RENHARD'S MARRIAGE WITH JOHN ALLERTON—THE LOVELY BRIDESMAIDS—THE WORTHY FATHERS—THE AMIABLE MOTHERS—THE JOYFUL SISTERS—THE BONNY BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM—THE LINK-MEN LEVY BLACK MAIL, THE FOOTMEN LEVY BLACK MAIL, AND THE GUESTS PAY THUS FOR THE WINE THEY DRINK AT DR RENHARD'S EXPENSE—'THANK GOD, IT'S ALL OVER.'

MILLINERS with band-boxes, dressmakers with big flat square boxes, and jewellers' men with cube card-board boxes seemed to have set out on a pilgrimage to No. —— Square. Certainly the number of these gentry was very great, and I have been informed that three milliners, one dressmaker, and two jewellers' assistants, with a casual link-man gathering information as to the approaching event, were all seen at one time together on the steps of No. ——

Eager faces bobbed up at the dining-room window and beamed with pleasant looks of excitement on every milliner, on every dress-maker, on every jeweller's man more especially, as they came up the steps.

Never was parish so permeated and imbued with the idea that *something* was going to happen. There was a vague feeling of restlessness gradually coming over the whole population. Little urchins playing ball in the Square, stopped their game to gaze with awe-stricken countenances at the bearers of boxes, and shouted out knowingly to each other as they pointed to the people—

‘Aint they a-going it at the Doctor’s?’

Fanny was unbearable, so great at this time was her conceit and gratified pride. All these people came on her account, and the interviews she held with her milliner and her dressmaker were innumerable. Committees of taste had been more than once assembled to deliberate with closed doors on the momentous subject of—

‘What shall the bridesmaids wear?’

More than once Fanny had pitched battles with her beloved sisters, whom she snubbed with impudent persistence. No. — was a *Champ Clos*, and the battles therein, though hidden from the outside world, were none the less *à outrance*. Mrs Renhard supported Fanny, and the Doctor supported Fanny, and Vaughan supported Fanny, for the reason principally that he was sick of the continual squabbles, and longed to get Fanny married and out of the house. Mrs Renhard *se pû-mait* with joy, and spoke complacently to her friends of her amiable son-in-law that was to be—of his handsome face, his splendid prospects, and the magnificent business his father the City Merchant had. All this in capital letters. One lady sneeringly said that Moses the clothes-man was a Great City Merchant. Mrs Renhard never forgave this lady for the implied depreciation of *her* City Merchant. In fact, long before the marriage took place all the Renhards' friends had become most heartily sick of hearing about it, and longed to see it over, in order for it to take the way

of all earthly things; that is, to be forgotten. Some openly declared that the whole affair was quite scandalous—that Fanny Renhard had persistently hunted young Allerton, and had so compromised him, that he had been unable to escape from her repeated attacks. Altogether many and conflicting were the statements that were afloat in the parish anent this marvellous matter. The beadle was on the *qui vive*, all the charity school children were primed, and taught to act a certain part with becoming grace in the forthcoming pageant. Of course the worthy Doctor knew nothing of the little preparations. He visited his patients about this time with a face beaming with such eecstatic happiness that they all noticed it and commented on it. But when the affair was all settled, and the proper arrangements had been made for the marriage to come off on the 12th of March, the Doctor could no longer contain his joy, but communicated the news to each patient in succession, and bade them all rejoice with him.

Perhaps the poor Doctor was inwardly

pleased also at the thought that the fits of temper and attacks of imaginary maladies from which Fanny had suffered and made the whole family suffer would shortly cease, or at all events be transferred to another man's hearth and home. In fine there was hardly a single person among their circle of friends, or in the parish, who could know of this approaching affair and think of it with feelings of calm, and with the necessary dignified joy.

The happy man looked particularly sheepish now and then in the presence of the family, and most decidedly bore himself in a very submissive manner towards his *fiancée*. Fanny ordered him here and ordered him there, told him to speak, and screamed at him to hold his tongue; sent him up-stairs and down-stairs for her *eau-de-cologne*, her handkerchief, or her smelling-bottle, and graciously permitted him to make her nice presents and rewarded him with a sweet kiss. She allowed him to come into her room and contemplate the cheval-glass in which she surveyed her lovely form, and occasionally, as an immense gratifi-

cation, she permitted him to put her slippers on her delicately large feet. As he belonged to her now body and soul, so she condescended to familiarity with him, inasmuch as she would scold him soundly before the whole family, and when he seemed inclined to resent it, would dash wildly at him and kiss him vehemently. Poor devil! It's a wonder to me sometimes how it was that he did not fly madly from this enchanting Syren, for certainly her voice sometimes had a very sharp tone. One of her sisters told me in strict confidence that once Fanny actually smacked his face! but as the sister in question was most enraged of all by Fanny's absurd airs, this statement must be accepted *cum grano salis*.

Ah, it was a very exciting time, and none such, let us hope, can ever occur again in the parish of ——.

The marriage had been arranged for March, because the Doctor had promised to take the happy couple abroad in April, after the honeymoon, which they were to spend at

Mrs Renhard's country-house in the Isle of Wight.

The amount of confabulation spent over this celebrated affair would fill volumes, but all is so foreign to the actual result that it is quite unnecessary for any of it to be reported in this veracious story. It would take up too much room, and would, besides, in all probability, only prove a source of *ennui* to the reader. And of all things to avoid that is the most important. Suffice it therefore to say that much confabulation and many committees of taste were necessary before the engrossing subject was settled.

First there had been a bother about bridesmaids. Fanny declined to be satisfied with less than six; and her three sisters martyred themselves on the occasion, secretly very happy to have a dress, and boots, and bonnet, and gloves, &c., for which they would not have to pay themselves. Then Allerton's sister had to be communicated with in the wilds of Yorkshire, and specially invited to spend a week at Dr Renhard's in order to

deliberate with them over the subject of the dresses.

Then Elsie Graham, who had promised to be one of the two needed to make up the six, at nearly the last moment wrote to say that in consequence of the death of her maternal great-uncle she could not be present. And the difficulty they had to supply her place was tremendous. In truth, I fear Fanny Renhard had rendered herself perfectly unbearable to all her friends, and they took a mischievous delight in disappointing her. Several made vague promises for the pleasure of writing the same evening that they would be unable to do what 'dear Fanny asked them.'

In fact it was at last only by a brilliant thought of Fanny's that the affair was quite arranged. She suddenly remembered that one of her school-fellows had promised, long time ago, to be her bridesmaid, and that she had promised to fulfil the like office for her at the proper time. Fanny had not seen her since she left school, principally for the reason that Pattie Whitlock's mother was a milliner

and dressmaker, and there were dubious stories concerning the paternity of the said Pattie. But all doubts were silenced at this supreme moment. Fanny hunted up her friend and reminded her of the promises exchanged in the old school-days ; and Pattie, who was a good-natured little thing, and still cherished some attachment to her school friend, readily consented to be one of the bridesmaids. Our friend Jenny Rorke was the sixth, but, of course, neither the last nor the least.

And it must be confessed that little Pattie Whitlock was the prettiest of all the six. Jenny Rorke was next, and then followed Miss Allerton and the Renhard girls, who would nowhere have obtained even a third-class medal for beauty.

Doctor Renhard and old Allerton mingled their fatherly effusion, and got on famously together. Old Allerton roared 'Damme' in stentorian tones over the Doctor's occasionally prurient sayings, and woke the echoes of the house to his loud guffaw. And those men

and women who have heard an *old* doctor talk will be able to understand that Doctor Renhard was often very indelicate, and told stories sometimes too broad for ladies to hear. But it pleased our friend worthy John Allerton, and his lauding laughter pleased the worthy Doctor. He had never had a better listener, or one who better appreciated his dirty jokes, and as a matter of course he had a great opinion of Mr Allerton's understanding.

They dined together nearly every day, and for Allerton the Doctor would have up his finest wines—Niersteiner at 30s. a dozen, and Moselle at 42s., Champagne at 60s., and fine old Port that he had had in his cellar since the previous summer. I forget the prices of the Sherry and Port exactly, although I have often heard them mentioned during dinner or dessert at the Renhards' table. Usually the Renhard family confined themselves to beef or mutton, and pudding, or pastry and cheese (American at 10½*d.* lb.). But since Fanny's engagement to the *fils aîné* of Damme Aller-

ton, they had plunged into the extravagance of six courses! Dr Renhard would have deemed himself degraded if he had failed to give his friend, Jolly Allerton, soup, fish, duck or game, partridges or the like, beef, two or three side-dishes, such as sweetbreads or cutlets, with three kinds of pastry, and two sorts of cheese. In fine, he felt it his duty to feed his friends at this time on the very finest and dearest fat of the land. And his friends would sit themselves down, and stuff away at his good things, and swallow down his fine wines with a gusto and a smacking of the lips that charmed the worthy Doctor, and made old Allerton roar 'Damme' with exquisite enjoyment and loud voice. For somehow Mr Allerton's vulgar origin was constantly betraying itself; however much he tried to keep it down, and smother by reticence all the old spontaneity of his vulgarity, yet it would crop up. He never ceased to testify to his thorough enjoyment of a good dinner by jubilant expressions, and rollings of the eyes, and smacking of the lips. He

poured wines down his throat just as other men poured water; and they had as little effect on him as water had on other men. He had been accustomed to raw whiskey, or fiery British brandy, and quantities of beer as a usual drink, during the early days of his life, so that a bottle or two of wine, containing about twenty per cent. of alcohol, had but slight effect upon so well-seasoned a toper. As to his favourite oath that broke out on all occasions, he would cry 'Damme' when most elated by joyful news; and growl 'Damme' when he received bad news. And his oaths only had one merit, inasmuch as he always contented himself with simply damning himself; he very seldom extended a like sentence to others. But in many respects Dr Renhard and Mr Allerton were widely dissimilar. Allerton heartily despised the class from which he had sprung, and thought no measures were too harsh to keep it in proper subjection. But he forgot, or overlooked the fact, that in the new class to which he had climbed, he only herded with the rank and

file, and perhaps never once thought of the brave old proverb: 'Better be the head of the bull-dog, than the tail of the lion.' Others, however, sometimes thought of it for him, especially when he set-to with congenial spirit, and quietly proceeded to talk down the lower classes, and endeavour to prove, not from statistics, not from argument, not from precedent or experience, but simply by his own word of mouth, that 'the labouring people were a damned bad lot.' It was particularly at such moments that the varnish of years cracked and fell off in patches, presenting the familiar realization of the old saying—

'Grattez le Russe, vous trouverez le Tartare.'

The two mothers, Mrs Renhard and Mrs Allerton, did not, unfortunately, agree so well together as their honoured spouses. In fact Mrs Renhard, who was a little woman, very choleric and very easily irritated, was stung beyond measure by a certain air of patronage with which Mrs Allerton accosted her; and being as proud of her pedigree (she numbered

a knight and two baronets on her ancestral tree) as Mrs A. was of her money, it was inevitable that these two ladies, however much they might kiss and fawn in public, must, in private, have, at last, after several fierce encounters, agreed tacitly to disagree.

In public it was :—

‘ Mr dear Mrs Allerton.’

‘ My dear Mrs Renhard.’

In private Mrs R. spoke of ‘ that old cat ’ with her beastly money-bags ; and Mrs A. was very indignant against ‘ that stuck up little Gipsy witch, so proud of her stupid pedigree, that she forgets how to behave as a lady should to a guest in her own house.’

I suppose there was no harm in all this, and that it would not suit the nineteenth century to see the old tragedy of Brunehilda and Cunegund acted over again. We are so pacific now-a-days that it is more decent to clothe all our wolves in fine sheep’s clothing than to let them run about in their native fur. And probably to the very last day of their lives will these two ladies throw the blame of

their bickerings and mutual dislike each upon the other. At any rate Mrs Renhard and Mrs Allerton agreed very well when they were surrounded by other people; but no sooner did they find themselves alone than some unfortunate subject of dispute would start up as if by magic.

But the girls managed to agree a little better, and Miss Allerton was charmed with Fanny's unbroken suavity of manner and sweet condescendence. It was very difficult even for quick-tempered Fanny to find much fault with simpering, placid Heloïsa Allerton. She smiled so frequently, and in fact so constantly, that many times Fanny became disgusted with her never-ending concurrence in all she suggested. Miss Heloïsa was very tall, very thin, very meek, and although not absolutely plain, yet could scarcely be called pretty. She laughed a thin little sort of 'He! he! he!' laugh, only opening her mouth, or rather separating her lips, just sufficiently to allow the sibilant sounds a passage, and to show her regular white teeth. She

agreed with everybody, and was every one's butt and laughing-stock. I have heard her assent cheerfully to a statement that the weather was quite delightful, and immediately afterwards concur with some one else in thinking it perfectly 'horrid.'

In the Committee of Taste her advice was always asked, and practically useless, as she never hesitated to advise two perfectly contrary things in the same breath. Perhaps she could not help this. Certainly the Renhard girls took an exquisite pleasure in obtaining from her these amusingly contradictory little speeches. It has been hinted before somewhere in this veracious chapter that the Renhard girls had so great a love for each other, and all especially so adored Fanny, that they never ceased bickering and fighting all the time these wedding preparations were in progress. But nothing could surpass their sweet equanimity of temper and gracious deference to each other *before company*.

Fanny secretly took advantage of this, and delighted to thrust little daggers, tipped with

poison, into her sisters, at moments when she knew that however much they inwardly raged, all outward visible signs of anger would be sternly repressed. It certainly was a joyous time. Miss Allerton was staying in the house, John came in the morning early and stayed all day, Willie and his father appeared at dinner-time, and usually stayed till eleven o'clock at night, and occasionally Mrs Allerton made her appearance, and for the time rendered Mrs Renhard's life a burthen to her, from the enforced politeness with which she was obliged to treat the scraggy-faced mother of young John.

At last the momentous day arrived. Invitations had been sent out to 85 guests. Philip and Adèle were invited, and Mrs Darrell also. Tom was not; and seeing this, Philip wrote to say that 'he regretted very much that he would not be able to be present at dear Fanny's wedding;' but as he sent her a neat little present—and that was the principal reason why most of the guests had been asked—Fanny forgave him his absence,

and contented herself with wearing and using the elegant painted fan Philip had sent.

The bonny bride was radiant with triumph. Her incipient rawness about the chin and nose was concealed by a thick layer of rose-powder, so cunningly laid on all over her face, that when carefully wiped away it left a delicate soft bloom upon her skin.

The sisters were up at seven in the morning and ate a spare breakfast, so as not to feel too uncomfortable when they were well laced up. Fanny required the aid of two of her sisters and the dress-maker in person before her wonderful robes were donned; and after three long hours spent in adorning her, she stood arrayed in a wonderful and magnificent gray silk, a crimson bow in her hair, and a broad sash of the same colour round her taper waist.

The bridegroom was, *comme de rigueur*, in full dress, and looked particularly sheepish and happy. The white tie became him immensely, as it helped to tone down a little the wonderful bright redness of his face. But

it could not be denied that he was a handsome fellow, and would become more good-looking still. He wore in his shirt front some beautiful turquoise and diamond studs, a present from Fanny Renhard's maternal uncle, and a diamond ring glittered on his finger. Altogether they were both splendid, and all the littlenesses of the past months were deservedly dropped into Lethe, before the grand and elevating spectacle of these two young folks going to be married. (By the by, Fanny was two years older than John Allerton, which would not be worth mentioning, only that the fact had been carefully concealed.)

At half-past ten the carriages began to arrive, and some of the privileged guests came at this hour to see the folks set out.

By this time all the bridesmaids were ready in their pretty pale pink dresses, with blue sashes and with blue bows in their hair, and each with a fine bouquet of hot-house flowers. Then they set off. The whole parish seemed to have assembled to watch the

event, and the old Doctor as he descended from his carriage and gave his arm to Fanny was recognized and vociferously cheered. Then they cheered Vaughan, who was to be best man ; then the lovely bridesmaids. In fact, they cheered everybody who came out of the carriages.

Whilst the ceremony was going on, the troop of school children was drawn up in two lines outside the church door, leading down to the gates, and when Fanny came out leaning on her husband's arm, they cheered with all the power of their shrill little voices, and emptied small baskets of early violets and primroses, with a few hot-house roses, on the path the bonny couple had to tread. They drove from the church straight home. But the numbers of people, men, women, and children, that streamed out of the church after the wedding party had departed was a sight worthy to behold. Half the parish apparently had got *inside* the church, whilst the other half waited outside; and the talking, and nods, and

looks of recognition were most amusing. They spoke of how the Doctor had roamed up and down the church, crying in a most doleful manner, and was quite out of sight when needed to give the bride away, so that Vaughan had to do it for him; how Mrs Renhard and Mrs Allerton had embraced, and because Mrs Allerton's brooch scratched dear Mrs Renhard's chin, they glared at each other fiercely the next minute. Both mothers had wept profusely, the bridesmaids had wept, the bride had blubbered, only the bridegroom preserved a stoical calm. Perhaps even at that supreme moment he did not quite comprehend what was being done to him. Perhaps he was completely overcome by his happiness; but also he may simply have been wondering whether Fanny *Allerton* would smack his face, *à la mode de* Fanny Renhard. I did not witness the wedding, but had these after details from an eye-witness. There is only one thing I received with doubt from my otherwise strictly veracious informant. He

told me that after the ceremony old John Allerton came forth and roared out through his blubbering—

‘Damme! Bless you, my dears!’

But as no one else heard or noticed any such scandalous behaviour on his part, we may justly pause before accepting this as true.

Seventy-five people sat down, or stood up, or screwed themselves into corners, at the wedding breakfast. Speeches were made and Champagne bottles emptied: many of the men drank the famous Champagne at 60*s.* per dozen out of tumblers, and several imbibed Moselle (at 42*s.* per dozen) out of claret-glasses, because they could not get wine-glasses! One man swore flippantly that the tapering Champagne-glasses were a ‘damned swindle,’ because he found it a nuisance to fill and empty them so many times to get something to drink! I know for a certainty that many of those present contented themselves with a couple of sandwiches and as much wine as they could get at.

Then after the breakfast was half finished

the happy bride and bridegroom drove to the station and took train for the Isle of Wight—of course *viâ* Portsmouth.

But the breakfast was nothing to the party and the supper in the evening. Eighty-five guests honoured the house with their presence. The consulting-room was turned into a refreshment-buffet, and many were the bottles of wine opened and emptied. Patients came notwithstanding, and the Doctor saw them in tail-coat and open waistcoat, and Vaughan helped to make up the physic in ditto costume, and with a costly hot-house flower withering in his button-hole. The assistant got strongly intoxicated, and swore wildly towards ten o'clock in the evening at the bottles for getting out of the way when he wanted them. He told one patient that he could not stand without holding on to the counter because of an attack of rheumatism; and terrified the person immediately after by sitting down with a bottle in his hand, and weeping maudlinly over it. I am certainly astonished that no one died from poison or an over-dose during

the next two days. The Doctor forgave it all, as there was no casualty happened from it, and set it all down to the honour his assistant paid his daughter.

Three link-men took their places under the awning that had been set up from the street door to the edge of the pavement, and levied black mail on every one who came in a carriage; so impudent were they and so fierce that several of the Doctor's friends never came to see him for a long time afterwards.

In the hall the footmen stuffed hats and shawls in outlandish corners, and boldly demanded 'Backsheesh' when their owners asked them to find them. Then outside the link-men assailed them for money, if they fetched a cab for them. Invariably two of the men went for one cab and both returned with it, and each clamoured for pay louder than the other. Those who had ladies with them were only too glad to thrust a couple of half-crowns into their hands to get rid of the annoyance.

Altogether many of the guests were right

royally fleeced, and several men swore that it cost them as much to go to Fanny Renhard's wedding party as it did to take a drag to Ascot, barring the bets. I'm told that the next morning one of the link-men came to ask the Doctor to pay him something for his services the night before; and that the Doctor laughed at him and told him that he must have made pounds, and that he didn't mean to give him anything.

When all the guests had departed and the Doctor, as soon as the last was gone, himself had turned down the gas in the drawing-rooms, and lowered it on the stairs, there was a general cry as the family went to bed—

‘Thank God! It's all over.’

But it was more than six weeks before the Parish ceased to discuss it; and the family invariably found it cropping up at times. They took a legitimate pride in telling those who had been unable to come, and even those who had been present, that they had 75 people at the breakfast and 85 to the evening party. If the Doctor was there when they spoke

about *the* wedding he would add that five dozen bottles of Champagne and Moselle were drunk that evening, without counting the bottles of other wines.

Altogether it had been a magnificent affair, and the honour was all the Doctor's.

Yet, they were right when they said—
'Thank God! It's all over.'

CHAPTER V.

MRS WRIGHT IN MAIDSTONE — SECRET AFFINITY — SHE FANCIES SHE SEES HER HUSBAND—JOHN WRIGHT'S LIST-SOLED BOOTS—MR GRIFFITH SPEAKS TO HIM, AND ASKS HIM ABOUT THE SORROW OF HIS LIFE—JOHN WRIGHT'S ANSWER—'IT WILL SOON BE OVER NOW, SIR'—ALLEN HEYSON BECOMES ANXIOUS ABOUT ADÈLE—'PHILIP! HAPPY PHILIP!'

MEANWHILE Mrs Wright had carefully established herself in Maidstone, and began her work of detection in a methodical manner. By Mr Fairtree's orders she made systematic visits of inquiry to every village surrounding Maidstone, but, as before hinted, no information concerning John Wright was obtainable, excepting in the villages on the London Road. So that after three weeks passed in these investigations, Mrs Wright could but feel certain that John Wright had

entered Maidstone, and had never left it since.

This sapient conclusion reached, the next thing to do was to search Maidstone. And here the wife's knowledge came in full requisition. The first place in Maidstone at which Mrs Wright made inquiries was the stone-quarries, but she soon found that no person answering to John Wright had ever been employed there. She had the same answers when she questioned the bargemen on the river and on the canal. In fact, it is useless to detail Mrs Wright's search, suffice it to say that all her endeavours were in vain. She could learn nothing about him. After this she set herself to patrolling the streets, to roaming through the markets, and generally wandering all over the town, in search of her hidden or hiding husband. It was easy to pass days and weeks in this pastime without obtaining any definite result. But one day she thought that her perseverance was to be rewarded. And it was in this wise.

Two men were walking along the same

side of the street. One tall, well formed, with handsome face, rendered somewhat remarkable by long moustaches and *Impériale*; the other, shorter, with smooth-shaven face and clustering hair, perfectly white. The young man was in front, and the other seemed to be following him. Something in the old man's walk attracted Mrs Wright's attention. She ran along a little way, crossed the road, and posting herself so that the two men must pass her, waited for them. As they approached her heart beat, and she was troubled. She thought she could recognize her husband. The two men passed, and Mrs Wright felt chilled with fear as the old man, with eyes bent down, arms hanging loosely by his sides, trod the road in front of her. She was afraid, because the old man's footsteps fell noiselessly on the ground!

Presently she saw a strange sight. The old man suddenly darted on one side, as the man he was following stopped and turned round. Mrs Wright noticed the look of horrible fear on the young fellow's face, that

was as white as chalk. She walked quickly forwards, and entered the narrow passage into which the old man had taken refuge.

There was no one there; and none of the people at either end could tell her anything of him. Mrs Wright felt strangely restless over this. She was almost certain that she had seen her husband. The peculiar stamp and shuffle of the feet as he walked was just like John Wright's.

She determined to be at the same spot the next day, and to wait for these two men.

John Wright saw his enemy to the corner where he usually left him, and darted up the alley, where he opened a low wooden door on the right, and entered a small room. An inner door led into a passage that formed part of the house to which the room belonged. The old fellow sat on a stool, and throwing his right foot on to his left knee, quietly proceeded to draw off a peculiarly soled boot. He put up the left leg in the same manner and drew off a similarly formed shoe. Instead of leather,

the soles were made of five or six layers of *list*, that formed a loose thickness, nearly equal to an ordinary leather sole. Then he put on a pair of ordinary boots that were in a corner of the room, and thrusting the others into his capacious pockets, opened the inner door, and walking along the passage, found egress in another narrow court some ten yards from the one Mrs Wright had seen him enter, and walked home to his work, making as much noise on the hard frosty road as any other man would. This was about ten o'clock in the day, and as he entered the garden gate, the coachman gave him a message from Mr Griffith, to go into the house, as the master wanted to speak to him.

John Wright trembled like a leaf, and the coachman wondered to see him so white. Everything now had this effect upon the poor wretch. Once when he was working in the garden, thinking over his miserable life, little Ettie had come silently along the path behind him, and suddenly calling out his name, ' Old

John,' he had been so startled and terrified that he actually fell, half fainting, on the ground.

Now the simple message that Mr Griffith wished to speak to him quite upset him; for he instantly thought, 'Have I offended the master, and is he going to send me away?'

However, he knew that it was of no use hesitating, so went at once to the back door and was admitted, and told to go into the consulting-room. It was the first time John had ever been into it, and he gazed round at the shelves full of books, and the nice sofa and arm-chairs and easy-chairs well stuffed and covered with fine dark green leather. There was a cheerful fire burning, and a big piece of wood on the coals was cracking and hissing merrily. Mr Griffith was seated in his arm-chair, before his table, and bade John Wright come further into the room and to sit down. The master had to repeat this order before John dared to do so. Then as Mr Griffith turned towards him and looked at him for a few moments without speaking, poor John fell

to trembling again. Mr Griffith noticed his agitation and unwittingly increased it by saying in a grave voice—‘ You need not be agitated; I only wish to ask you how it is you are so much out just now?’ John Wright passed his rough hand over his forehead, that was covered with perspiration, and he stammered out confusedly that ‘ he didn’t mean any harm by it, leastways to you, sir.’

‘ Ah! no harm to me, eh? Then whom do you always follow when you go out? For mark you, John, I hear many things about you that are rather suspicious! Come, now, tell me all about it, and let me see whether I can be of any help to you.’

John groaned and hid his face in his hands. ‘ Oh, sir!’ he cried, ‘ don’t ask me! I could not tell you; besides, what I have to do I must do alone!’

‘ H’m! Poor man,’ said Mr Griffith, who could easily see how terribly his gardener was suffering. ‘ You seem, John, to have a great deal of sorrow. Is there anything I can do for you?’

‘ You are so good to me,’ cried John ;
‘ but nobody can help me.’

‘ Surely something might be done for you,’
cried Mr Griffith. ‘ For I like you, my
friend. You came to me unknown, but you
have always done your duty and your work
well. And my little girl Ettie is very fond of
you, so that you can’t be a bad man—’

‘ Oh, I’ve never done any wrong in my
life, sir,’ interrupted John.

‘ Well, I can believe you ; for I do not
think that children or birds,—for I have heard
all about the robins, John,—I say, I don’t
believe children or birds are easily deceived.
Now are you sure I cannot help you ?’

‘ You’re very kind, sir ; but I don’t
think you can help me,’ said John. Then
as he rose to leave the room, he added—
‘ It will soon be over now, sir.’

With that he went out and returned to his
work, and passed an hour weeding and clip-
ping the plants in the garden. Afterwards
he went into his little house and sat among

his robins, who, joyous to see him, came chirruping gaily round him.

Little Robin flew on to his shoulder and poured out such a story into his ear, and fluttered and got so excited over his song, that John was obliged to take him in his hand and kiss him, and opening his waistcoat put robin in. The little bird nestled there and said 'cheep-cheep,' then tucked his bonny head under his wing and went to sleep. But only for a minute, for presently he fluttered and hopped out of the warm nestling-place and perched himself on the hat that John Wright had thrown on the table. I am bound to add that little Robin, knowing no better, had the impudence to dirty the table. John Wright did not take any notice of the want of delicate habits in his favourites, and thus, I am afraid, somewhat confirmed the birds in them.

He sat moodily thinking of what Mr Griffith had said to him. He felt that no one could feel as he did, that no one could help him at all in the work he had undertaken.

It must be done by him alone. Sometimes he had begun to fancy of late that all his caution was useless and thrown away, and that somehow his enemy would again escape him. But now he no longer had the power to go back, he felt borne along by an irresistible impulse. The habit of watching Tom Darrell every day had incorporated itself with his life, and he could not have given it up unless he had wreaked his revenge. Poor wretch! In the midst of his absorbing pursuit what misery he suffered. Every touch of a hand on his arm sent him into a cold sweat of positive terror. A man shouting to him from across the street would make him start up ready to fly. In fact, his life was become utterly worthless to him. He was growing very thin, and the haggard look in his face increased every day. Perhaps he would have thought his misery lighter had he been able to know how much his enemy suffered as well. But actually John Wright never thought of this, or of the terror his constant following caused Tom Darrell. He only followed him

to keep him in sight, and to make sure that he was not going away from Maidstone. He knew that a favourable opportunity was bound to arise sooner or later, and he was content to wait.

For some little time past he had met Allen Heyson in his usual walk, and Allen had noticed the old man following Tom Darrell with a strange clinging persistence. Allen was becoming very anxious. He could no longer doubt that Adèle loved Tom, and he marvelled at it, when he remembered how passionately she had loved Philip. It made his life wretched to have to look on so passively, perfectly unable to interfere. Once he had hinted a suspicion of Tom to his brother, but Philip had turned almost fiercely upon him and refused to listen. It was asking him to doubt his brother's loyalty and his wife's love. Now we have shown how Tom had always abstained from doing anything that could injure his brother, and Philip knew all this very well. Indeed he knew all his brother's history as well as Tom did himself. And he,

had been almost pleased to welcome him to his home, for the thought had arisen that the companionship of a pure and virtuous creature like Adèle, and his own simple straightforward life, might have some good influence upon him. Now be it noticed that Allen knew nothing of the vices and follies of Tom Darrell's past. He only knew that the first day he had seen him again since the old school time he had felt a thorough dislike to him. The flippant tone he had adopted in the conversation in the garden had caused Allen to feel a vague sentiment of mistrust, and his subsequent short intimacy with Tom, soon after the latter's arrival at Philip's house, had only served to embitter his dislike and increase his mistrust. How often he had longed to be able to make Philip see as he saw! But after the one attempt he knew that it would be useless. And, besides, it must be said that poor Allen was afraid to speak again more explicitly, lest Philip should forbid him his house; and in that case all his opportunities for watching Tom

would he lost for ever. So he let matters rest, himself all the while half mad to have to watch the play of love, the exchange of smiles, the hand-clasps that passed between Tom and Adèle. To have to watch all this, himself all the while loving madly and hopelessly, was exquisite torture to this noble heart. Adèle insensibly acknowledged Allen's influence sometimes, and certainly she felt that every action of her life, perhaps her every gesture, was noted by him. She dimly perceived also that Allen loved her, but she could not comprehend the nature of a love that could content itself with devotion and unremitting watchfulness.

Philip was making progress and becoming day by day more esteemed, respected, and loved. His patients were almost numerous, and the old fogies of Maidstone marvelled to see a young doctor so soon achieving success. He had the good fortune to save many well-known people, actually, according to public rumour, from the jaws of Death; and as rumour always magnifies and increases in

noise as it recedes from the first propagator, so was Maidstone presently full of the renowned cures performed by Doctor Darrell. Philip thus unexpectedly found himself the marked of all men, and coming to hear whence proceeded his sudden fame, industriously set about contradicting the exaggerations, and at last actually sent to the leading Maidstone journal a full account of the four or five cures, and was at the pains of stoutly denying the inflated stories of the illnesses he had successfully treated.

But this straightforward letter simply added to his popularity ; for every line was so stamped with the genuine Hall-mark of Truth, and the cases themselves were narrated with so much true modesty, that the number of his admirers increased from the moment he showed them what he really had done.

Mr Griffith, who was waxing old, was secretly very proud indeed of Philip's talents, and many a time had congratulated himself on having met with him ; although in public he was always careful to maintain his proper

relation as head partner. The children were all of them exceedingly fond of Philip, and, a thing somewhat unusual, Mrs Griffith more than shared her husband's esteem and liking for him. Altogether life was little by little turning her bright side to him, and the warm rays of the Sun of success were beginning to fall upon him and fill his heart with pleasurable emotions. He never once dreamed of the Serpent at home that was dragging its slime over his house. Adèle was more gentle now towards him, and often listened more patiently than she used to the *Diner du Comte de Boulainvilliers*, or the noble precepts of the *Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard*.

His life was very calm, with all its daily hurry, for it was a life of routine, and Philip set himself to his tasks in a methodical manner, which if it dimmed some of the excitement yet eased much of the actual hard work. Then in the evening with his book, and now and then a cigar, Philip would pass hours as happy as any of his life. Adèle would come and sit by him, and he would

love to stroke her soft hair with his hand, or now and again bend down and gently press a kiss on her upturned forehead. At such moments there would be no talking and no sound, only when Philip read out some noble maxim or beautiful thought from the pages of his favourite books ; for he read and re-read them many times, and *Emile* almost lived for him, so well did he know him. The pencil-marks against noble passages of the *Vicaire Savoyard* were very numerous, and he was never tired of dwelling upon them, and in his daily life he lived up to the precepts of that simple and beautiful Profession of Deism.

Never again, perhaps, may Philip, noble honest Philip, live such happy days. Life is full of pitfalls, and snares are laid on every road, into which many that are innocent of Evil fall as blindly as the Guilty.

Only he ever kept alive the Beacon that had been hitherto his guiding light. Philip never lied to his patients, never refused to pay a visit when he could gather that it really was needed, and always had the courage

to say that he would or would not call, as required. In every way he strove humbly and bravely to carry out the grand Precept of his Philosophy—his Duty. He was never tired of saying to himself that he was not created for nought, that having chosen a certain line of life, he was bound to carry out to the utmost the duties he had undertaken. As he invariably showed the fullest consideration for his patients, they gradually learned to place implicit and sensible confidence in him, and endeavoured to keep to the rules he had made known to them concerning visits or calls. But many a time Philip's cosy evening would be interrupted by sudden urgent messages, and to such he never shrank from attending, for he knew now that his patients rarely sent for him for nothing; and no rain, hail, snow, or ice could prevent him from hurrying out to relieve their suffering, or calm it by the confidence his mere presence often inspired. As he was easily pleased and had but simple wants his home life became happier continually. Adèle

now set herself seriously to the tasks of her daily life, and every day of course added to her experience and gave her greater ease and power over her work.

And this is how Philip's household stood the day before Tom Darrell's letters were returned unopened from Sophy McCleak.

Since then the change had been great, but he had never yet noticed any. His simple life passed on as before, and he did not remark Adèle's growing inattention to him or sometimes half-shrinking manner when he bent down from his book to kiss her.

God is always merciful and kind, and sometimes it is a happiness not to be too logical. So it was now with Philip. His happiness was still undiminished, and no suspicion came to sting him into misery. He saw that Tom and Adèle liked each other, and he certainly noticed that Tom spent his evenings nearly always quietly at home, and that when he was out it would be with Adèle and Allen Heyson to some tea-party or home concert. Philip himself rarely went out; and

the poor fellow occasionally felt very lonely sitting silently reading in his little dining-room—and alone.

But otherwise he was happy, and by his actions and many kindnesses to others evinced his gratitude to the beneficent God who had placed him upon a world wherein such calm happiness could be enjoyed.

And Philip, in his humble way, prayed fervently, although never a form of prayer passed from his lips in spoken words. He prayed by his work, by the suffering he relieved, by the pleasure and happiness he caused to others, and by his simple duty, well and honestly done.

Who shall say that this is not the best form of prayer?

CHAPTER VI.

A DROP OF WATER FALLING ON STONE—TOM DARRELL AND ADÈLE—PHILIP BECOMES RESTLESS—AN ORGANIST AND CHOIR-MASTER WANTED—ALLEN PERSUADES TOM TO TRY FOR IT—TOM LEAVES PHILIP'S HOUSE.

ALL the changes briefly hinted at in the preceding chapter had not happened suddenly or abruptly. The old story that water falling drop by drop will wear a hole in the hardest stone was fully and completely applicable to Tom and Adèle.

When a young ardent nature hears, day after day, repeated in witty jest, biting sarcasm, and sharp irony, the sophism that 'Virtue is simply an affair of convention,' that 'Love is a passing passion, and should not endure to all time;' when every social *bienséance* is persistently and consistently

mocked at and set aside as a useless chain, and when these detestable sophistries are spoken by a handsome man, witty, bold, and unscrupulous, to a quick ardent woman, the physical fact changes into a moral fact; all right feeling, all pure thought, love, duty, and every chaste sentiment is gradually sapped and destroyed. When the ears have grown accustomed to a jest that hides its obscenity under the mask of its fun, to a humour always satirical, that touches upon topics usually left on one side, then woe to the girl or woman who is forced to listen.

Tom Darrell was a master of that peculiar kind of wit that consists in saying a dirty thing in droll phrase; and as Philip was away all day, Adèle at first laughed at his droll stories, for the simple reason that she felt so dull as to be glad to listen to anything that would tend to break the monotony of her daily life; but also at first she had blushed even whilst she laughed. But little by little this feeling became blunted, and soon she laughed without blushing. And in this I hardly

know how to condemn. It is a truism, that when people get accustomed to hearing oaths and profane language, they gradually acquire the habits of using them. Now in Adèle this terrible change was going on. She had learned to laugh without blushing at funny (?) stories, of how husbands had been deceived, and how lovers had triumphed over their mistresses, without actually understanding in *what manner* the husbands were deceived, or *how* the lovers had triumphed. She only saw the clever stratagems that were adopted, without entirely seeing the end obtained. And in his way Tom was very clever, and had always been careful not to be *too* clear spoken, lest Adèle might see the truth in all its disgusting and terrifying nudity. Probably at first Tom had been simply bent on having some one to laugh with him; certainly he did not begin by deliberately setting about seducing his brother's wife. Unconsciously, perhaps, he sowed seeds that fell on open soil, and would spring up rank and luxuriant one day, to die out as quickly

as they grew, from want of nourishment. He only wished to amuse himself, and as he hated being dull, and found that Adèle disliked being dull as much as he did, he had set about dispelling that dulness in the way best known to him. Evil breeds evil. Katie Wright dead had yet frustrated his hopes. And the hand of the corpse had thrust itself between Tom and the only true love he had ever felt. After his dismissal by Sophy Tom had become practically desperate. He renounced all hope, threw over every fresh chance, and fell back again into the full evil of his past life. He wanted excitement, he wanted some one to love. Here, under his very hand, he had found them. Certainly it was Philip's wife. Bah! What would it matter? How would Philip ever be any the wiser? How would he ever feel dishonoured? How indeed! *Unless he found it out!* And by sophism and sneering at Philip Tom succeeded in persuading himself that it would serve Philip right.

Philip wasn't worthy of Adèle. She was

quite thrown away on such a stolid fellow. And see how he treated her; scolded her as if she was a maid-servant, and compelled her to do a servant's work. Of course he wasn't worthy of such a pretty creature; and if another man should come who *was worthy* of her, where was the harm of their loving each other? All the time the worthy man would not object to the girl he loved being scolded and worried by the *unworthy* man, as it would give him the chance of sympathizing with her and so turning her affection away from the unworthy man to himself, the worthy one (?). Some such thoughts as these actuated Tom Darrell, and as he was so infernally clever at excuses, he was soon able not only to condone his conduct, but actually also to justify it.

The kisses they exchanged night and morning powerfully contributed to this effect. Philip did not object to their kissing *before* him, and from that how easy to conclude that he would not object to their kissing *behind* him!

Adèle with her quick passions and partly

neglected education fell almost immediately under the charm of Tom Darrell's manner. She never once looked upon her conduct as reprehensible or immoral. She allowed Tom to hold her hand and to kiss her, and would kiss him back with pleasure. Gradually she allowed herself to become estranged from Philip, and Tom's sarcastic raillery taught her to consider his honesty as the substitute for dishonesty that didn't pay, his steady calmness as stupid indifference, his simple homely manners and easily satisfied wants as the marks of a coarse vulgar mind, pleasing itself with little things.

Yet with all this there had passed nothing between Tom and Adèle that was outwardly guilt. Their thoughts were perhaps guilty, but their actions had not gone beyond the limit that marks the boundaries of innocence. And it was one of the idiosyncrasies of Tom's character that much as he could find excuses and easy palliations to his criminal love for Adèle, yet he could not bring himself to *think* even of profiting by Adèle's love whilst he

was living under his brother's roof-tree! Strange it is that being able to see this point, or rather to *feel* this point so acutely, that he did not follow it up to its legitimate conclusion; that is, that to meditate this deed anywhere was a foul and dastardly wrong.

Sometimes I have been tempted to think that man has no free-will, and no power whatever of controlling his own actions. For I have seen men go blindly on in a course of life that was bound to bring shame and disgrace, with never a turn to the right or to the left. A single hour's reflection might have been sufficient to show them whither they were drifting, but that hour was never given up to reflection, and the man or woman went on and was wrecked.

There was some fatal twist in Tom's moral fibre that prevented him from probing his own actions to their legitimate depths; or rather it was so distorted that he never obtained a full knowledge of what he was doing. He thirsted for pleasure, and as his pleasures comprised Women and Wine, he would get

drunk, or debauch a woman with equal *abandon*.

For some days Philip had begun to experience a vague restlessness utterly foreign to his character. There seemed to be something growing up beside him that filled him with an incomprehensible alarm. He vainly endeavoured to analyze the feelings that disquieted him so strangely; he could arrive at nothing beyond the fact that he was restless, without being able to understand why. He no longer felt *safe*, and at times suffered from attacks of such horrible melancholy as to make him fear for his reason. At such moments he found no relief with Adèle, Tom was hateful to him, and the only man whose presence soothed him was Allen Heyson. So that after the first two attacks of this restless melancholy, Philip would rush out to find Allen, when he felt its symptoms coming on. He never suffered from it during the daytime; his patients absorbed his attention so completely that all else was shut out. He nearly always wrote out his list of visits to be made

during the breakfast, and wrote his prescriptions as he ate his dinner. It was in the evening that this feeling would slowly come over him. Sometimes when his hand was toying with Adèle's soft flowing hair; once or twice it seized him as he bent down to kiss her. It was a horrible feeling. Like a chilly mist slowly filtering its dank coldness through the clothes, it *crept* upon him, and until he could break its spell by rushing from the house, he suffered exquisite pain. He dreaded his evenings at home now, unless Allen was there, and sometimes he astonished his friend by his earnestness in asking him to pass the evenings with him. Nothing loth, Allen would come, and Philip would keep the terrible enemy away by playing chess, or reading aloud passages from his favourite authors. Philip never explained to Allen the reasons he had for asking him to be with him; but clear-sighted Allen, little by little, pierced through the veil of his reticence, and at once understood what Philip could not fathom.

And without telling Philip that he understood what ailed him, Allen set about finding some means of giving him permanent ease from the phantom. But beyond forming, and instantly discarding as soon as formed, plans to get Tom away from his brother's house, he could do nothing but go to Philip during the evening, or take Tom out with him to some party.

Poor Philip was terribly troubled by his strange illness, and consulted one or two fellow-doctors about it. But all the advice they could give him was to do less work, and be less anxious over what he did do. He tried the effects of their plans, but whether he did little or much, the melancholy would sometimes overpower him just as before.

At last he went up to London and consulted a leading physician, whose whole life had been spent in the study of brain disease. The doctor listened calmly to his statement of his case, then briefly, but pointedly, questioned him. About his manner of life, the house he lived in, the people who lived in his house,

and the character of these people. He especially asked him searching questions about Tom. And when he had finished his questioning, he paused for a few moments to consider, and then told Philip that all he could recommend to him was less solitary and quiet habits, more society, and plenty of evening distraction. That was all that could possibly benefit his case. Philip thanked him and returned to Maidstone, where he tested the efficacy of the advice. It was completely successful as long as he kept up a ceaseless round of pleasure parties, concerts, balls, &c., after his day's work was ended. But he soon found that his health was breaking under the continued strain, so that he relinquished his gaieties and sank back into his calm steady routine of work, resting as before, in the evening. And, as before, with Tom and Adèle in the room, sometimes playing together and singing, or even at times when Adèle was seated on her little tabouret reading at his side, and his hand caressed her hair, the old horrible creep-

ing melancholy would come again, and he would have to send for Allen Heyson, or rush out and take a long tiring walk.

About the end of March there appeared in the Maidstone paper an advertisement for an organist and choir-master. Allen saw it first and brought it to Philip, with a suggestion that Tom should try for it. As the salary was not mentioned Tom at first hung back, but Allen took the trouble to make some inquiries about it, and found that the position was a most advantageous one. So that Tom, who had as great a mastery over the organ as he had over the piano, applied for the office, showed how efficient he was, and obtained it. The salary was £120 a year, with a house to live in, furnished, and full license to give private lessons as many as he liked, so that they did not interfere with his duties.

Now Tom had begun to feel uncomfortable in his brother's house, and fearful every day of a terrible discovery of his designs upon Adèle. And besides, he did not entirely

succeed in his endeavours to stifle the feeling that it would be treachery doubly heinous to seduce Adèle under her husband's roof. True, it came to the very same thing, wherever it should be done; but Tom was superstitious, and had become so imbued with this particular superstition, that he was really glad when he had concluded all arrangements with the Wardens of St Mary's, and found himself installed in the little house close by the church. He plunged into his new work with all the ardour its freshness gave him, and soon proved his capabilities by making St Mary's the finest choir in all Maidstone.

Allen breathed again when he heard of Tom's removal, and Philip for a time ceased to suffer from his miserable attacks of melancholy. He put it down to his improved health, and his wisdom in throwing up the pleasure-parties and sticking to his work. Allen now formed the third person in his little household, and his presence or Tom's absence for a time banished the terrible Visitant.

Tom came occasionally, only, now and stayed part of the evening ; during which poor Philip sometimes felt the unaccountable chillness creeping over him again ; as if some deadly influence had been brought into communication with his body.

CHAPTER VII.

MRS WRIGHT SENDS A MESSAGE TO THE DETECTIVE—SHE SEES PHILIP DARRELL'S NAME ON THE DOOR-PLATE—THE DETECTIVE PAYS A VISIT TO MAIDSTONE AND WONDERS HOW HE COULD HAVE BEEN SUCH A FOOL—PHILIP AND MR FAIRTREE—ADÈLE HEARS SOMETHING ABOUT TOM AND KATIE.

MRS WRIGHT had posted herself as she intended so as to meet Tom Darrell and old John on their usual morning walk. Several times she saw old John, and each time with a stronger suspicion that it was her husband. At last she sent a message to Mr Fairtree the Detective, telling him of her suspicions and also of the great change that had so altered John Wright, as to make her doubt whether it was really he or not. The Detective went to Maidstone immediately he received this message and found Mrs Wright more

excited than ever. As soon as she saw him, she carried him off up the street, and after half-an-hour's sharp walking stopped before a house and pointed to a brass plate fixed on the outer railings. The plate bore the inscription—

*Messrs Griffith and Darrell,
Surgeons.*

The Detective read it over. Then Mrs Wright pointed to a smaller plate fixed on the house-door and bearing the words—

*Dr Philip Darrell,
Surgeon, &c.*

‘What a fool I am!’ cried Mr Fairtree. ‘Why, that’s the name of the man who attended the young girl at the baker’s shop in Holborn. Dr Renhard gave me this address, but I did not make any note of it at the time, and since it has quite slipped my memory. Why, we are all right now, ma’am! Well may we cry out, What fools we were! Never to have thought of this!’

With that he turned on his heel and

walked away with Mrs Wright, from whom he gathered full particulars of all she had done and all she had seen since she had been in Maidstone. Over and over again he called himself a fool for being so utterly blind and neglectful of what he should have done to find Tom Darrell or John Wright. As the evening was coming on, he told Mrs Wright to come for him the next morning and try to show him the two persons she mentioned. Then he went to the Roebuck, and mingling with the men in the stables, and talking with the people drinking at the bar, he soon gathered heaps of facts about Philip, and also ascertained that he had a brother staying with him, whose name was Tom. Fairtree took himself severely to task for his stupidity, and wondered very much how it could ever have happened. He set it down to the fact of his having been so eager after John Wright that he completely forgot the Darrell part of the business, especially as he had soon found that John Wright had not come from set design to Maidstone, but had simply worked his way there, and

perhaps remained quite by chance. Or he might have seen the name Darrell and have been somewhat influenced by it to stay in Maidstone, with the hope of meeting his enemy. Any way the Detective reproached himself very severely, and with great reason.

Mrs Wright came for him as *per* appointment, and together they posted themselves on the road that John and Tom Darrell used to take. They waited and saw Tom Darrell pass them, but no John Wright. Had they placed themselves a few hundred yards further down the road they would have seen him, as usual, dogging Tom Darrell's footsteps.

There seems to be some fate in these missed meetings and disappointments. However, there was no help for it that day, and the Detective was obliged to content himself with patrolling the streets in the vain hope that he might fortunately meet this white-haired old man. But after all he had to wait till the next day, when, having placed himself with Mrs Wright in the same place as before, he saw John Wright come, pass him slowly, with head

down, and did not recognize in that worn face, that white hair, the man he was seeking. He told Mrs Wright at once that he was afraid she had made some mistake in the matter.

‘How old was your husband, ma’am?’ said he.

‘About fifty-three when he left Shirley,’ said Mrs Wright, ‘about eight months ago.’

‘Well, that man who just passed us I could swear is seventy,’ said Mr Fairtree; ‘but just for the sake of being quite sure about it, I’ll go this afternoon to see Mr Darrell.’ Just at this moment old John passed on the opposite side of the road, going back to his work.

Mr Fairtree said in a low voice to the wife, ‘I’ll follow him,’ and she waited and allowed the Detective to go on in front of her.

Wright walked back to Mr Griffith’s quite unconscious of being followed, and Mr Fairtree watched him go through the gate. Then he went over to Philip’s house, knocked, and asked for Dr Darrell.

‘Dr Darrell was out, but expected back at one o’clock. Was it anything important?’

‘No, it was nothing of any consequence; he would call again at one.’

‘Would the gentleman leave his name?’

‘Yes! There could be no harm in that—Mr Joseph Fairtree, of London.’

‘I will tell him, sir, of your calling,’ said the servant, and with a nod Mr Joseph tripped down the steps and walked away.

At one o’clock precisely he returned, and found Philip at home, who came to him after he had been kept waiting a few minutes in the study.

Mr Fairtree rose and introduced himself.

‘Sit down, sir, I beg you,’ said Philip, taking a chair himself. ‘Have you called to consult me professionally?’

‘No, sir. I have called upon a matter of business—business connected with a murder.’

‘Ah! indeed. May I ask,’ said Philip, with a smile, ‘what I can do for you in the matter?’

Here there came a tap at the door.

‘Come in,’ cried Philip.

Adèle showed herself. ‘Can I come in? I hear the gentleman has called on business?’

Philip said ‘My wife’ to Mr Fairtree, with an interrogative sort of look.

‘It will be all the better for Mrs Darrell’s presence,’ cried the Detective; ‘a woman’s wit may help us to clear up some obscure matters of detail.’

Adèle accordingly came in and sat down by her husband’s side.

‘Well, sir! It is about the murder of Kate Wright at Shirley——’

‘Stop,’ said Philip. ‘I am in possession of most important information on this matter. I shall be happy to furnish you with it if you will be so kind as to abstain from all mention of other names.’

The Detective looked astonished; then as his eyes rested on Mrs Darrell, he winked knowingly at Philip in sign that he would be careful on those points. Philip continued—

‘Katie Wright was not murdered at Shirley.’

‘Not murdered at Shirley?’ cried the Detective.

‘No,’ said Philip, ‘she was not. I attended Katie Wright during a long, severe attack of brain fever, at the shop of a Mr Seigert, baker, in High Holborn, London.’

‘Oh, ho! Why, I’ve been taking a deal of useless trouble in the matter. Can you tell me where I may find the girl, then?’ cried Mr Fairtree.

‘You will find her buried at Leyton,’ said Philip.

‘Leyton? Is she dead? Why, how do you know all this, sir?’ asked the Detective, disgusted to find that he had spent so much time for nothing.

Philip explained to him that he had been called suddenly to Leyton to see a gentleman dangerously ill. That during the time he spent in attendance on this gentleman he heard of the finding of Katie Wright’s body in a pond in the forest. He had seen the body, and was quite certain that it was Katie Wright.

‘Were there any marks of violence on the body?’ asked the Detective.

‘Yes. There was a wound, rough and swollen, on the back of the head—but that might have been done by her falling against a stone as she threw herself into the water.’

‘Was the gentleman Mr Tom Dar——?’ The Detective pulled himself up, but too late. Adèle had heard him, and finished the phrase for him.

‘No! It was not Mr Tom Darrell who took the girl Katie Wright from London.’

Philip looked at his wife in utter astonishment. How could she know anything about it? He had forgotten the letter he wrote to her from Leyton, fully detailing the abduction of the girl. Now as the details were told over again, Adèle remembered that she had heard all this before, but could not recollect when or how the news had reached her. And now with her fierce love for Tom boiling over at the seeming injury to him, she cried out that Tom had not taken Katie away.

The Detective said nothing, only bowed;

and looked at Philip, as if waiting for him to speak. 'I think you had better set about inquiries at Leyton in this matter,' he said.

'Thank you much for the kindness with which you have given me this information. There is still one thing more I wish to ask you. Have you seen John Wright lately?' said the Detective.

'I have never seen John Wright at any time,' answered Philip.

'Well, I asked because I have a kind of suspicion that the old fellow, white-haired and smooth-faced, who works over the way at your partner's, is John Wright. His wife, who is here in Maidstone, thinks she can recognize him. Can you tell me his name, and how long he has been working there?'

'Well, all I can tell you,' said Philip, 'on that subject is that we have always known him by the name of old John; and he was engaged to work in Mr Griffith's garden about six months ago.'

'Ha! That's about the time John Wright got to this town!' cried the Detective.

‘ Still, even if it is John Wright, I think that it would be better for you to make your inquiries at Leyton before you take any steps against him,’ said Philip.

‘ I think you are right, sir,’ answered the man; ‘ and I will follow out your advice.’

With that he took his leave, thanking Philip very much for the information he had given him. Mrs Wright was waiting outside. Mr Fairtree did not tell her all that he heard from Dr Darrell, as he wanted her to stay on the watch in Maidstone whilst he made his investigations at Leyton. Accordingly he only communicated enough to her to keep her perpetually on the *qui vive*. Especially he recommended her not to lose sight of the old white-haired fellow—and it may be readily supposed that Mrs Wright promised to keep well on the watch, as long as he should be gone. Then the Detective left Maidstone for London, and London for Low Leyton, where he began systematic inquiries, and soon was able to trace up the whole course of this ob-

scure affair of Katie Wright's death. He discovered the fly-man who had driven Tom and Katie from the station; and managed by dint of questioning to find out that a man answering to John Wright's description had been seen following them, had waited outside the house, had rushed after them into the forest with a thick stick in his hand, and that shortly afterwards screams for help had sounded from the wood. Further than this, he could trace nothing excepting as regards John Wright and Katie. John Wright he traced back to London, and found upon inquiry that he had been known to possess a peculiarly carved cudgel, and that the morning after the Epping Wood affair he had returned without it. Two days after Katie had been found drowned in a pond, with a wound on her skull that might have been caused by a heavy blow from a cudgel. The cudgel itself was at the police-office at Leyton, and Mr Fairtree saw it. He strangely enough could find no trace of the people who had

helped Tom Darrell and nursed him in their house, and only a vague account even of his having been ill there could be picked up.

So it was only natural that the Detective should feel forced to conclude from the knowledge he had obtained, that even if John Wright were innocent of a murder in Shirley Wood he *was* guilty of one in Epping Forest.

But one fact puzzled the Detective. Why had John Wright returned to London and his old haunts in London, where at any moment the hand of Justice could seize him? He could only explain it by assuming that the man had some idea that by a cunning manoeuvre of the sort he would be able to throw the police off the scent. And in point of fact he had done so, and the mystery hanging over the Epping Wood affair would never have been cleared up, but for the information Mr Fairtree obtained from Philip Darrell. Fearful, therefore, of losing his prey through any informality in the warrant for his apprehension, the Detective applied for and obtained a fresh

warrant, which specially applied to the supposed murder in Epping Forest.

Armed with this document, he proceeded to make his way back to Maidstone, and lay in wait for the old man with white hair, who he supposed was the veritable John Wright.

These details take but a short time in their relation, but in actual fact Mr Fairtree had spent six days away from London during his investigations at Leyton. And with his journeys to and from London and Epping had consumed another two days. The delay necessary to obtain the revised, or, more properly speaking, the corrected warrant, had taken up the whole of another day; so that it was really after an absence lasting ten days that he was able to return and take the necessary and legal measures at Maidstone for the arrest of the supposed murderer.

Meanwhile many things had happened, some changes had taken place, and the end of this history was coming quickly.

Adèle had not listened for nothing to the conversation between Mr Fairtree and her

husband. Under the veil of reticence adopted, at Philip's wish, by the Detective, she had pierced, and some glimpses of a hideous truth had flashed out upon her. Philip had asked her no questions concerning her abrupt and most singular denial of Tom's abduction of Katie Wright. In fact, he had not deemed it worthy of notice, save in the light that Tom must have improved greatly to gain so much esteem from Adèle. Philip, unfortunately for himself, committed the mistake of thinking that he had himself all the wisdom of the serpent allied to the tenderness and lovingness of the dove. He thought he was logical when he really was little else but a creature of impulse; only, by God's blessing, the impulse had always been in the right direction, and had become so much a habit, that, although Philip might act foolishly and precipitately, he seldom wronged any but his own interests.

Adèle had hardly ever fully understood his character. She had loved in him, less his noble simplicity and honourable candour, than the memory of her kind playmate in the old

school-days, and, unfortunately, what Philip had taken for love was simply a passing ephemeral passion, a love less of him than of his past, that could never return. Once committed to it, Adèle had submitted with a ready acquiescence that poor Philip had always interpreted in his own fashion, that is, as an indication of the harmony of their respective characters. And perhaps for the time Adèle really had returned his love bravely and truly; but this feeling had faded a little under the ceaseless corrections and occasional scoldings she had received from Philip anent housekeeping and household expenses. Then Philip's plainness of feature, awkward, ungainly manners, had been daily contrasted with Tom's easy grace, handsome countenance, and polished address. Poor Philip's wit, that was always good-natured, had paled before the incisive irony of Tom's humour and sarcasm. And perhaps Madame De Brenne's want of good principle had unconsciously fallen upon her child—a fatal mantle, that only differed from the Shirt of Nessus by its

proving more fatal to those around than to its actual wearer.

The road was very slippery — the slope became steeper every day—only John Wright was watching Tom Darrell. Allen Heyson was watching over Adèle, and vigilant to save her honour and Philip's happiness. A faithful watch-dog was the honest lover; but unlike the watch-dog, he was forbidden to bark, and dared not yet show his teeth for fear of its being too soon.

Meanwhile God watched over all, in the far distance, and controlled His creatures by the immutable action of the laws He has created for the world's governance. And the leaden feet now were every day drawing nearer, and the iron hand was ready to dart forth and strike.

CHAPTER VIII.

‘DID YOU LOVE HER, TOM?’—‘NO! ON MY HONOUR, ADELÈ’
 —THE INTOXICATION OF A MOMENT—TOM’S SUPERSTITION
 SAVES ADELÈ—A WARNING VOICE!—TOO LATE—TWO
 FACES UPTURNED IN THE MOONLIGHT—ALLEN HEYSON’S
 AGONY.

THE same day Tom called in to tea, and was a little astonished to find Philip very serious with him, and Adèle quite cold and indifferent. Of course he endeavoured to account for the sudden change, and equally of course was quite unable to comprehend it. He tried to get up a conversation, but his stories were heard with inattentive ears, and his jokes fell stillborn. What did it all mean? He was perfectly unable to find any reason for it, and was as little likely to guess the true

cause as to solve the problem of squaring a circle.

Philip was not unkind—welcomed him as usual, and seemed glad to see him. Yet there was a something that he seemed to think of the next moment that made him grave and almost distant. And Adèle, too—that was the bitter part! For a moment the terrible thought came across him that all was known to Philip, and this serious reception was only the prelude to the cessation of his brother's friendship and Adèle's love. And in justice to Tom Darrell it must be said that he actually trembled at the idea of losing his brother's friendship. But only for a single moment did this feeling overcome him; the next a single glance at Adèle dispelled it. And it was certainly ridiculous that a man who was bent upon breaking up his brother's home, and dishonouring his wife, should for a single instant feel any regret at losing his brother's friendship. Unfortunately, man is a creature full of composite emotions, so interced and interdependent, that striking one

chord will often cause many others to vibrate and sound also. The situation was becoming embarrassing, Tom felt very uncomfortable, when the spell was broken by a quick knock at the street-door, and a violent pull at the bell.

‘If you please, sir, you’re wanted,’ said the servant, coming in.

It turned out to be a message to go immediately to Mrs Bankrett’s, as Mrs B. was in ‘labour.’ So Philip thrust his hat on, slipped his pocket midwifery-case into its usual receptacle, and hurried off. As he slammed the door after him, Tom looked up at Adèle, who sat silent and motionless the opposite side of the table. She had suddenly become very pale, and her lips trembled. Tom left his seat, and took one close to Adèle. She did not move away, so he took her hand in his and said—

‘Adèle! Why are you so strange with me to-night?’

Then she turned to him, and looked straight into his face, with a searching, mourn-

ful glance. Tom was troubled by it, and could hardly help lowering his eyes a little before it.

‘You have been deceiving me,’ suddenly said Adèle. ‘You do not love me as I love you. You cared more for Katie Wright!’ And at these words Tom became as white as Adèle.

‘Good God!’ he cried. ‘Who could have told you such lies against me? And how could you, Adèle, believe them?’

‘Isn’t it all true, then?’ said Adèle. ‘Didn’t you take Katie Wright away from London, and stay with her at Epping? Oh, tell me! Is it true?’

Tom trembled with suppressed fear and rage. He, for the moment, could think of nothing to say. He, usually so fertile in excuses, so quick in framing and uttering a lie, could not find one to serve his purpose. So he hid his face in his hands, as if from grief, that Adèle should believe this against him, and cried in a sad voice—‘Oh, Adèle!

How unhappy you make me! I thought you loved me better!’

But Adèle only answered, ‘Tell me! Is it true? Tell me! Is it true?’

Then Tom looked up, returned Adèle’s burning glance, and said, ‘No! It is not true!’

Adèle pressed his hand fiercely in hers and cried, ‘Say it again.’

And Tom said—‘No! It is not true!’

For a moment Adèle was silent, only trembled, and her face flushed and paled alternately. Then she looked up again at Tom.

‘Did you love her, Tom?’ she said.

‘No! On my honour, Adèle!’ answered Tom.

‘Then love me!’ cried Adèle, throwing herself into his arms. ‘Take me! Kiss me! Tell me how you love me. Press me in your arms! Tom! dear Tom!’ She seemed dazed, and panted; her bosom rose tumultuously, her warm breath fanned him, her long soft hair wound round him, her clasping arms

pressed him to her convulsively, her words intoxicated him. Tom's head swam! and a mist rosy-red rose up before his eyes. For a moment he forgot everything. He pressed Adèle's yielding form in his arms and covered her hands, her neck, her face with burning kisses. His breath came with a hissing sound through his parted nostrils—he was all fire, all excitement, all crime. Adèle clung to him, and kissed him, and caressed him. His blood leapt and boiled in his veins with mad desire, and he lifted Adèle in his arms, and sprang to his feet. Her voice spoke to him hot words of love, and her lips pouted as if asking him to press his to them in a long clinging kiss. Dazed, blinded with lust, Tom lifted her up. His arms were wound round her body, his lips were pressed to hers, when suddenly the mist cleared away, his eyes recovered their sight, and he remembered that he was in his brother's house—under Philip's roof. And his hands unclasped, his lips tore themselves away from Adèle's, he sank on his knees and cried—

‘Oh! Pardon! Adèle! Not here! Not here, under Philip’s house-roof!’ Adèle bent and seized his head in her two hands and looked into his eyes swimming in the moisture of warm love. And she kissed him and said—

‘Tu as raison!’

For the time Adèle was saved by Tom’s feeling of superstition, regarding the crime he committed as deadlier under Philip’s roof than elsewhere! The fire had burnt low, and the room was quite cold. The bright moonbeams poured in at the window, and filled the room with pale soft light. Everything stood out clear and distinct in relief against this pure splendour. Tom and Adèle went to the window and looked out through the big panes up at the sailing moon and the shining stars. A child passing by was singing in a clear sweet voice, that was so full of purity, of happy innocence, and of soft affection, that involuntarily Adèle looked up to Tom, as she shuddered at the warning voice. Tom saw the impression the child’s strain made upon

her, and he wound his arms round her, and drew her near to him, and kissed her cheek tenderly. They stood there forgetting that the flood of moonbeams fell full upon them, and lighted up their faces with terrible distinctness. The burning passion had subsided, almost as quickly as it had arisen, and love was now only written in soft looks, in tender smiles on their faces.

Allen Heyson had set out to pay Philip a visit, as he had heard that Tom was going up there to tea. As he approached the house, he noticed that the blind was up, and the room unlit save by the moon. But there were two figures standing by the window. Allen only needed to look once to recognize Adèle and Tom Darrell. The light was full upon them, and every lineament of the faces upturned to the moonlight was clear and distinct.

Allen stopped short, and a groan broke from him — a groan full of untranslatable pain, of terrible suffering. He turned and crossed the road, and stood in the shadow of the houses watching them. He could see

everything in the room behind the two figures at the window. The clock on the mantel-shelf, with its round white face, the match-boxes, the Dresden ornaments at each end. He never perhaps forgot the look of the room as he saw it that night. Tom and Adèle seemed to stand out from a background of pure white. The big beads of perspiration rolled down Allen's face all unheeded. He was sobbing with heedless noise! He was cold and yet hot, the perspiration chilled him with its clamminess; he could feel the pain caused by the nails of his fingers clenched into the palms of his hands. He felt it without even once noticing it, since the inner moral pain was so great that it overpowered and killed the physical. He was in an agony of grief, fear, and despair. He ceased to hope, he ceased to have the strength to hope; he forgot in his despair that he had done all he could to prevent this happening. At last his body became numbed, whilst inwardly the fierce battle raged. There was no longer any doubt! Adèle loved Tom Darrell! Oh, the agony of

the thought! It burned into his brain like the searing of a red-hot iron. He longed to move away, to withdraw his eyes from the sight that was killing him with its horrible fascination. But his limbs refused to obey his will, and he remained rooted to the spot.

He could not feel the cold, as his body was insensible now. A peculiar stupor crept over him at moments, but this he was able to subdue and dispel. His eyes had the glaring, fixed look of a person in a trance. Yet all the time fierce passions were tearing his heart. All the love he felt for Adèle seemed turned to gall and wormwood. He fancied once that he could taste its bitterness rising into his mouth, and he spat out the saliva that was in it, for it seemed to have caught the bitter taste. He saw nothing but Adèle and Tom, and sometimes *through* them and behind them poor Philip; but Philip as he usually looked. Then he saw his own form enter the room, but these images were so ghostly and yet so vivid that his flesh crept and his hair

stood up with fear. He tried to groan, to cry out, but could not. Nothing seemed to come to break the charm. He heard the child singing as it passed before the railings of Philip's garden, but he did not see it. Only Adèle—only Tom, and sometimes Philip and himself.

He could see Tom's hand peeping from under Adèle's arm, and he could guess that his arm was round her waist. He saw Tom kiss her as the child passed singing, and his soul leapt forth to place itself between them. But his body he could not move—that was beyond his power; and now his soul was becoming weak and fluttered. He felt as if all his energy of mind and will was failing him; and with his last remaining strength he addressed a vague strange prayer to the Almighty Father.

A step sounded along the road. A well-known form stepped out into the moonlight, and Allen recognized Philip Darrell, and saw him walk up to his street door, and enter the house

And then Allen Heyson fell on his knees and prayed.

* * * *

About a half-hour after this the moon had passed over the houses in whose shadow Allen was kneeling, and soon the moon-beams fell on him and lighted up his face, marked with the agony of his late terrible watch. Philip was standing by the window looking out on the road while supper was being prepared. When the moonlight veered round he saw the kneeling figure opposite his house, and the pale face seemed very familiar to him. As the man did not move, Philip put on his hat, and without saying anything, went out and walked over to where Allen was.

At the same moment Tom and Adèle came to the window, which they had left when Philip entered, and both at the same time saw Philip go up to this man and help him to rise; then saw him bring him gently across the road, and as he came nearer they both recognized Allen Heyson. Adèle sank on to a chair, covering her face with her

hands. Philip calling 'Adèle,' roused her, and she went out.

'Get some hot water, the brandy, and a tumbler,' cried Philip—then added, speaking to Allen—

'Steady! old fellow! Thank God, I saw you there; in another half-hour you might have been half dead.' He brought him into the room, where a bright warm fire was burning now, and placed him on the sofa.

Allen's face was pinched and drawn, as if from cold, but in reality it was from the agony he had suffered as he watched Tom and Adèle.

Philip had the sofa wheeled up to the fire, and gave him some of the hot brandy-and-water. Presently he revived a little, and Philip gave him the remainder of the brandy-and-water.

Then Allen looked up, saw Philip's honest kind eyes gazing tenderly at him; saw Adèle and Tom watching him with blanched faces; and turning away his eyes from them, poor Allen hid his face in his hands and burst into

a passionate fit of weeping. Philip tried to calm him, begged him to be a man; to keep up, and not give way to such sorrow; all the time his own heart bled to see his friend so suffering, and he had much ado to keep from sobbing himself.

Allen's fit of weeping gradually died away, and he got up and told Philip he could not bear to stay. Philip wished to walk home with him, but Allen assured him that he was all right, and begged him so earnestly, so wildly even, not to go out any more that night, that Philip consented, simply to calm him. But Allen turned to Tom and asked him whether he would go with him, as their roads lay nearly parallel. A nod from Philip made Tom agree, and so the vile and the noble lover walked away together.

CHAPTER IX.

PHILIP SEEKS AN EXPLANATION FROM ALLEN—A SAD, MOURNFUL STORY—PHILIP IS INCREDULOUS—THE BLINDNESS OF FATE—TOM SEES AGAIN THE WRAITH OF KATIE WRIGHT—AND LISTENS TO THE SOFT FOOTSTEPS—A MOMENT OF REMORSE—PHILIP'S MELANCHOLY.

PHILIP was strangely agitated all that night by the thought of Allen's illness. He had noticed immediately that he was kneeling exactly opposite the window of his dining-room. And as he thought over the matter he remembered that the blind was drawn up, that no light save the moon-light was in the room when he came in, and that Tom and Adèle had been standing by the window. He had seen them as he passed the window, and they had nodded to him as he walked up the little gravel-path leading to the

house-door. Why then had Allen placed himself where he could see everything that took place in the room? Then he recollected the hint he had received from him once about not allowing his wife to be so much alone with his brother, and a horrible thought entered his mind. What if Allen had conceived a mad love for Adèle? - And finding that Tom's presence acted as a bar to the prosecution of his designs, should be attempting all he could to detach Tom from his home, in order to have an open field for himself? Strange it was that Philip should suspect his friend rather than his brother? But so it was, and strangely also he instantly remembered many things that hitherto had seemed unworthy of notice. He remembered that it was Allen, who, first by hints, then by recommendations, had procured Tom private pupils; and just recently had been at the trouble of making inquiries, the result of which had been that Tom had taken the place of organist at St Mary's Church, which most effectually removed him from Adèle's side. And Philip

remembered also that when Allen had passed the evening at his house, which had been very frequently, his eyes would perpetually wander from his book or from the game of chess they often played together, away after Adèle and Tom; and often had he seen him give an angry start now and then as he watched. Oh, fatal perversity of error! We see very often only that which we wish to see; and our eyes are blindly closed to the truth spread directly before them.

From all this Philip worked dimly to a supposition that Allen loved Adèle so madly as to find Tom's presence in his house an impediment to his success, and, in order to remove him, had tried to bias him against Tom, by inuendoes casting suspicions upon his wife's truth and his brother's loyalty. So that he came to the determination to seek Allen the next morning, and demand from him the explanation of his singular conduct. And as he wished to spare Allen as much as it was possible, Philip said nothing to Adèle of his design.

Many things at this moment came to his mind, and he lay awake half the night thinking of them. His thoughts wandered back through the past years, to the old school-days, to the happy times he and Tom had spent together. Their jolly games at the school in America, away in Connecticut, and the kind people they had lived with in the village. Then, after that, the school-days in France, where at first they had found themselves somewhat isolated among the French boys, and had a poor time till they learnt to speak French. And all through the school-days Philip saw only the protecting figure of his brother. Who helped him always to fight the many battles of those days? Who bore punishments that might have been very hard for delicate Philip? Who, indeed, but dear brother Tom! And just now they tried to poison his mind against Tom, and to separate those who had nearly all through their life been together! By a strange fit of reflection Philip pierced straight through the life that Tom had led since those days, and although

he saw its darkness, yet he refused to dwell upon it, preferring to go back to the time when they were boys together at school, and there had been no such temptations or dangers to escape.

Who can tell how much there is of fate in our lives? Who can tell how much or how little there is of free-will in the ordering of our actions? When such scenes of life as these are unfolded to our sight how often do we not say—‘To what good all this suffering? To what end can all this pain and misery lead?’

The beneficent Creator does not bring his creatures into a world where all is fixed and immutable. The *laws* of life indeed are unchangeable, but the actions and their consequences in each individual life can only be regulated by the creature itself. Else what can be the fit punishment for a crime, that a being has been created and pre-ordained to commit! How can we know Virtue, if our vice or virtue is regulated independently of our will? Hardly one man exists who has

not pondered over these hard problems of human existence. And how few are they who have felt able to solve them! Religion and Morality have vainly endeavoured, by a code of artificial beliefs, to bring forward some explanation and some rule whereby man can guide his actions through life. But the key-note has not yet been sounded. The Hymn of Humanity, that is, of Man's relations with his fellow-men, has not yet been sung. It is not to a Mystic, Hidden, Incomprehensible Deity that one must look for the solution of these problems. They must be worked out and solved by Man's own Power of Brain. Many of the thoughts we have recorded above passed through Philip's mind during that night of watchfulness. In the morning he got up, unrefreshed by his night's rest, and after breakfast went out to call upon Allen.

Allen was in his little work-house at the foot of the garden, and started up when he saw Philip enter, and his face grew flushed as

he noticed his grave look. Unfortunately Philip noticed the blush, and took it as a sad confirmation of his suspicions. They shook hands, and after closing the door, Philip sat down on the vacant chair.

‘I’ve come to have a talk with you, Allen, about last night’s affair. You must forgive me if I seem rude in asking you for a full explanation of your motives for standing opposite my house watching it.’ Philip paused and looked up at his friend.

Allen’s face was deathly white and drawn as if by sudden pain. He returned Philip’s look bravely and honestly.

‘You *can* give me an explanation, Allen?’ added Philip.

‘Yes!’ answered he, ‘I can. But, my dear friend, pause before you force me to make it.’

‘Not so,’ said Philip; ‘it is better for us to be frank with each other. Again I ask you—Why did you stand watching my house last night?’

‘I will tell you, if you will first answer a question of mine. In what state did you find me last night?’

Philip started. The question seemed pregnant with other issues than those he came to raise; but he answered at once—

‘You appeared to be suffering, Allen; and from the lines on your face, the stains of tears on your cheeks, you must have been either very ill, or have passed moments of agony such as age men in a few hours.’

‘Well, then,’ cried Allen, standing up and turning his face to the light of the window, ‘look at me! Look at the lines on my forehead and the wanness of my face. You talk of moments! I passed nearly two hours so full of torture that if Hell existed it could not give more exquisite pain. And now you come to ask me to explain the cause of my suffering.’

‘Yes! I wish you to explain it,’ said Philip.

‘Ah, you do not know what you are asking. But still—why should I hold my tongue

now? I have played the silent watch-dog too long, perhaps, already.'

He sat down and leant his head upon his right hand, probably in thought as to how best to break the terrible truth to his friend. Then he looked up.

'You remember, Philip, long ago how one night in this garden—need I say after what?—that I came to you, took your hand and wrung it hard in mine, and flung it away and left you. Didn't you guess then why? Didn't you know that long before you came to Maidstone I loved Adèle De Brenne?'—Allen stopped here.

'Yes, I remember that night,' said Philip.

'Well, then, can you make no guess now as to why I was kneeling last night—oh! in what agony!—there in the pathway opposite your house?'

Allen's face was still as pale as ever, and there was a terribly mournful ring in his voice. Philip had bent his head and averted his eyes from the sight of such deep grief.

'Oh! Philip, my friend! Could you see

how I was suffering last night, and how I suffer now, and still harbour a suspicion that I could ever, even for a single instant, strive to dishonour you?’

Philip said nothing in answer to this appeal.

‘You knew,’ continued Allen, ‘since that night in the garden, that I had loved Adèle. Well, I love her now as strongly as ever!’ Philip stood up.

‘Sit down again,’ cried Allen, and Philip did so. ‘Sit down! for you have only heard the beginning of my explanation. You have asked me for it, and you shall listen to it to the end.

‘Yes! I love Adèle! but I do not love your *wife!* For Adèle I would cheerfully and willingly give my life, as I nearly gave it last night, to save her honour and happiness from ruin. You refused to listen to me once before when I spoke to you about your brother and Adèle, now you must hear me. Your brother loves your wife, and Adèle returns his love.’

‘It is a lie!’ shouted Philip, as he sprang

to his feet. Allen passed his tongue over his dry lips to moisten them, but did not move. Philip was ablaze with excitement.

‘Sit down again! You have not heard me to the end,’ said Allen.

But as Philip refused, by an abrupt gesture, he stood also and continued—

‘I say that they love each other, and I have seen a proof. Last night I walked to your house, as I knew that Tom Darrell was going there to tea. It was about a quarter to seven when I reached it. The moon was shining brightly and flooded the dining-room with light, for the blind had not been lowered. And at the window, full in the light, I saw Adèle standing by your brother’s side. His face was bent down to hers, and he kissed her lips, and I could see that his arm was round her waist! And I had to look on! I who love Adèle so dearly! I had to look on, unable to stir, for a horrible numbness came over me, and I could move neither hand nor foot. So I remained, suffering such agony as ages men in a few hours, until I saw you pass,

open the gate, and the door, and go into the house. Then I only remember falling on my knees, and trying to pray!' His voice broke down here, and his limbs yielded to his weight. He fell on a chair by the little table, and burying his face in his hands and outstretched arms, he sobbed piteously.

Philip was touched by this violent sorrow. Every word Allen had uttered had a ring of truthful sound. Philip took his hand and held it in a tight warm clasp. Presently Allen raised his head, and with the signs of grief clinging to his face, said a few more words—

'You know, Philip, how Tom got private pupils. I did it to get him away from Adèle. You know how the place of organist was pressed on his acceptance. I did it to take him out of the house where Adèle lives. Forgive me if I say that I mistrusted your brother ever since the day he spent here. I mistrusted him then, I hate him now. That is all I have to say, Philip; take it as you like. I wish it was not so horribly true!'

'I can hold your hand in all confidence,

Allen,' said Philip, 'for I think you have spoken nothing but truth, *as you see it*. But I am afraid that unconsciously you have taken a wrong view of all this. I have encouraged Adèle to be kind and intimate with Tom, as I feel full trust in her, and I do not believe that Tom would play me false. You do not know him as I do,—the days he and I have passed together at school; and although Tom's life has been full of follies, yet he has never all through done me any injury; and I do not believe that he would do it now. I have wished to fix him in good habits and give him a love of home-life; for that reason I have been glad to have him in my house. And I am sorry you should have conceived so harsh a prejudice against him.'

'Philip! Philip! you will drive me mad by your obstinate blindness. Why will you not believe me? Have I ever lied to you? No! Although just now you called my explanation a lie, yet you know that in all our relations to each other I have never equivocated,' cried Allen. 'You refuse my warn-

ing! pray to God that you or I may not have to suffer for it!’

‘Well, well, my dear fellow, never’ mind! I promise you,’ said Philip, ‘that I will profit by your kind advice. Thanks for having proved to me that my suspicions of you, though right in one respect, yet are wrong in their bearing. Good-bye for the present. I must hurry back now to set off on my usual morning round. Griffith will wonder what has become of me.’

‘Good-bye,’ said Allen. He stood watching Philip walking up the garden, and lamented that Philip should prove so blindly confident. Allen could foresee plainly what would be the only result of this conversation. Philip would be more blind than ever to the crime being carried on under his roof. He would hug himself secretly with a mad confidence in his wife’s virtue and Tom Darrell’s loyalty! Perhaps feel pleased to see Adèle take so much pleasure in Tom’s society, and rejoice to see Tom attracted so much by Adèle! In fact, there seems some Inexorable

Fate that carries men on in the paths they have chosen; and their conduct, once shaped, seems difficult to change. Nothing could change Philip's love for his wife, nothing break down his confidence in his brother's loyalty to himself. Perhaps not even the overwhelming proofs that hereafter may be brought against his brother will even change his brave trust for a single moment. It may be reserved to Adèle herself to confirm the truth of Allen Heyson's story, and show to Philip in all its horror his brother's vile character. For the moment Philip went on his routine of work with a warm glow of feeling for Tom, a kind pity for Allen, and undiminished love for Adèle. He was kinder than ever all that day, and many a wan pale face was kindled into smiles by his cheery voice and brave words. God bless you, good Philip, though you are too confiding!

The events of the preceding night had not been without their effect upon Tom Darrell and Adèle. Each had seen Allen raised from his knees, and brought into the house by

Philip; and the thought had instantly risen, 'How long had he been there, watching?' That Allen Heyson had been watching them Tom did not doubt for a moment, for he had often seen him noting all he did, said, or looked at Adèle, when he was spending the evening at Philip's. And he was terribly and rightly troubled by the fact. Allen's face had been so expressive of suffering that Tom had instantly suspected the true state of the case. With his devilish wit he guessed that Allen loved Adèle; and he wrongly concluded that the suffering he evidently had undergone had been caused by furious jealousy, arising from disappointed love. His mind refused to rise to any higher idea of Allen's love. He could no more conceive of such ceaseless devotion than he could master the science of Mathematics in two hours. The very idea would have seemed ridiculous to Tom Darrell. Besides, as they walked home together, he had noticed that Allen was strangely gay, and uttered the most nonsensical common-places he had ever heard. Con-

sequently he determined to call on Philip early the next morning. Circumstances, however, prevented him. The rector had called to see him respecting some new music it was proposed to introduce into the church, and had detained him talking about it till he only had just time enough left to enable him to be punctually at his first pupil's. So that one thing and another rose during the day to prevent him from going to Philip's; and it was past tea-time before he could get away from his choir-practice and set off to his brother's house.

On the way he had a terrible fright. Just as he turned the corner of his street he came face to face with a girl, who stopped, looked full at him, and suddenly seemed to disappear. Tom fell back against a wall, for he had seen again the Wraith of Katie Wright. Oh, it was unmistakable this time. And the figure had looked at him so reproachfully, and so mournfully. He had felt cold as she approached him, and horribly chilled to the soul when she passed by him

and disappeared. For a moment he could not walk on—all his strength was gone, his teeth chattered, and his face was very pale. His imagination brought up the Katie Wright who had been found drowned at Epping, and he shuddered at the ghastly picture. But he presently rallied and walked on; and now his terror became doubled in its intensity, for behind him came the footsteps almost noiseless and peculiarly shuffling that had haunted him for so long. His blood ran cold as he conjured up Katie, dead, phantom-like, dogging his every step. He dared not look back lest he should meet the ghastly image his imagination had conjured up. For a moment, again, he re-lived his life, and his many foolish actions, his many wicked actions, rose up in judgment against him. He caught a sudden transient glimpse of the crimes he had committed, and only thought of as pastimes and pleasures. He saw Katie Wright beseeching God for mercy on her miserable soul. He saw one young girl stark on a

floor with livid congested face, a handkerchief knotted round her throat; and he knew why she had died. He trembled as he saw in this different, truer, purer light the actual facts of his past existence in all their horrible nakedness and pollution. And he turned inwardly from that past with loathing and disgust. But suddenly the chill of fear died away, the thoughts that had thus obtruded themselves disagreeably to his mind were forgotten; for he had ceased to hear the haunting footsteps.

He turned round and could see that no one was following him, and he actually laughed as he remembered how frightened he had felt, and felt at a shadow.

He saw too that he was drawing near to Philip's house, and as the darkness was coming on fast now, although the moon was at full,—the clouds that had collected, foreboding a storm, effectually hid the light,—quickenened his pace, and soon was knocking at the door.

Philip and Adèle were seated side by side, and Philip was reading aloud some passage from his book.

‘How are you, Tom, old fellow?’ cried Philip as he saw his brother.

‘All right! Thanks!’ said Tom, astonished at his warm reception.

‘Sit down there, while I finish this passage,’ said his brother. And Tom accordingly sat down and had to listen to a long passage from the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. ‘There! What do you think of that?’ cried Philip as he finished. ‘I think that description of home life is splendid! How Rousseau must have yearned at times for something of the kind. And what a strange thing it is that the two authors, Goldsmith and Rousseau, should have written the finest descriptions of home joys, when neither of them ever had a home of their own whence they might have drawn their inspiration.’

Tom made some answer to this burst of praise from Philip, but as he had never read ‘Julie,’ and had almost forgotten the

‘Vicar of Wakefield,’ I dare say his answer had little bearing on the subject. So Philip left his book, and began talking to Tom about the position of organist he had lately obtained.

‘Don’t you find it rather tedious at times, Tom?’ asked he. ‘I’m afraid I could not sit out many sermons or pass much of my time at church.’

‘Well, as you very rarely do go to church,’ cried Tom, ‘I don’t wonder at your caring less every day for it.’

‘That’s true enough, I must acknowledge,’ said Philip. ‘I much prefer to stay at home and read the “Vicaire Savoyard,” than to listen superciliously to a man making vain endeavours to explain and vulgarize the Incomprehensible. I don’t like to hear from another man, no wiser nor better than I, that my soul is damned unless I repent.’

‘I am afraid the rector would not care to tackle you on your belief or unbelief,’ said Tom, ‘as I hardly know which would prevail in the argument.’

‘I am very glad,’ said Philip, ‘that he

is not a meddlesome man in that way, for I am certain that I could not stand much churchy argument from any one. I should try to convert *him*.'

Tom did not care about arguing anything at all, so he managed to turn the conversation, and presently little by little Philip found that he was being left on one side in the talk between Adèle and Tom. So he took up his book again, and endeavoured to interest himself once more in the fortunes of 'Julie.' But the book had somehow lost its charm; instead of Julie, he heard Adèle's soft voice, and instead of the Baron, Tom's familiar face was before him. And involuntarily his thoughts wandered away from his book; he forgot Adèle and Tom. The figure of Allen, kneeling with upturned, agonized face in the moonlight, rose up before him. Then he rehearsed the scene of the morning in Allen's work-house in the garden—he saw again his friend's face, ploughed with lines of grief and suffering; he heard his voice, so earnest and

clear, and almost every word of Allen's story sounded again in his ears.

And he felt cold. For just before him again was rising and gathering round him the chilling mist that filled him with so much dread. A something material, and yet only visible to the inward eyes of the soul. All the horrible melancholy that he had thought driven away returned to him with increased strength. His head whirled, and suddenly, unable to bear it longer, he sank on his knees with a loud groan. Tom and Adèle flew to his side, and as he heard his wife's voice, a something impelled him to stand up, push her on one side, and rush from the house.

'Oh, follow him, Tom!' cried Adèle. Tom seized his hat and ran after his brother.

Philip stopped soon, and looking round found himself standing bare-headed before the Heysons' house. The horror that had caused him to fly from home had left him. Tom came up at this moment, and taking his brother's arm, felt him trembling as if from

ague. Philip was very pale, though beads of perspiration stood on his forehead. Tom said nothing to him, only took his arm and led him gently away. Philip went with him unresistingly, and said not a single word as they walked home.

Tom was full of an awful wonder. He had never before been so much affected by his brother's late fits of terror. He had been startled by the deep groan, and by Philip's falling on his knees. Then he had noticed that he pushed Adèle aside as he rose. There was a strange unfathomable look in Philip's eyes when Tom came up to him, that had given him quite a shock. Philip seemed to be gazing at something far away, and this look haunted Tom in after years, when thousands of miles were between them.

He appeared quite right again when they reached the house, and Adèle came forward to meet them at the door. Then Philip kissed her cheek, and Adèle shuddered, for his lips were quite cold. After he had been in his easy-chair for some little time the pallor left

his cheeks, and his eyes seemed to return from the far distance they had appeared to look upon.

A little while afterwards Tom rose to go. He felt so decidedly uncomfortable after the late strange occurrence that he positively dreaded lest it should happen again. He had noticed and been told that Philip never had these fits of melancholy excepting when he was passing the evening with him and Adèle, so he had managed to get some clue to the real cause of this half-madness, and guessed that there was some strange feeling at work in Philip that might one day lead him to the discovery of his intimacy with Adèle. Had Tom been aware of the conversation that Philip had held with Allen Heyson in the morning I fancy that he would have been doubly uncomfortable.

As it is, we see that, paradoxical as it may seem, both Allen *and* Philip were right. Philip, however, in a less degree than Allen, since he extended his confidence to his brother in all ways, whereas Tom had long ceased to

feel any scruple as to carrying out his love for Adèle, excepting that he hesitated to touch her under Philip's roof. And as yet he had not been with her anywhere else, except sometimes when they went out together for a walk. But Allen saw more clearly. He utterly hated Tom, and firmly believed that nothing on earth could be powerful enough to induce him to discontinue his guilty passion. He did not quite understand Tom Darrell. In fact it would have been wonderful if he had. All that he felt was that he thoroughly hated him. Philip had hardly quite recovered from his melancholy when Tom bade him good-night, but gradually the mist that had fallen upon his mind cleared away and his soul re-asserted its supremacy. Still he felt very weak and went early to bed, to turn and toss, and lie awake half the night, oppressed with strange doubts and sad forebodings of threatening evil.

As Tom walked home the soft shuffling, almost noiseless, footsteps dogged him to his very door. As he entered [the little front

garden he turned round, but could see no one. Had he looked over the low palings that were between his strip of garden and the footpath he could have seen a figure crouching, a man with white hair, that showed distinctly in the moonlight.

For John Wright still followed his enemy, still dogged his footsteps, in his shoes shod with list. And his footfall was like the footstep of God, almost noiseless, but ever at our heels.

CHAPTER X.

ADÈLE SENDS FOR TOM—THE LAST LINK IS BEING FORGED—
—TOM THROWS HIS LAST SCRUPLES BEHIND HIM—THE
SILENT WATCH-DOG—ALLEN HEYSON SCENTS DANGER—
ALLEN FOLLOWS ADÈLE—THE MEETING BY THE WIL-
LOWS—ALLEN SAVES ADÈLE—JOHN WRIGHT'S REVENGE.

THE events of the last two days had rendered Adèle well-nigh desperate. Passion kept down and stifled soon becomes a terrible monster, that breaks through the prison and sometimes rends the doors asunder as it escapes. Adèle was becoming frightened at what she was doing. She felt terribly miserable, and seemed to be under some horrible spell. Tom had gained most thorough power over her. She no longer had bodily or moral strength to resist him. And, besides, Allen had been watching her, had seen her with

Tom, had seen them standing in the moonlight, and certainly must have seen Tom kiss her lips as they stood there. The depths of her nature were roused, and her soul revolted against the restraints that seemed to surround her life. She had arrived at that period when the mind assures the heart that no one loves, no one can love, as it does. She had managed to persuade herself that Philip no longer loved her, in order perhaps to find some excuse for not loving him any more, or more likely she never reflected on these matters at all. She went on madly, blinded by the lust of her passion for Tom's handsome face. Yet all the time, though she struggled fiercely against it, there was coming up in her heart a dim sense of his utter unworthiness; but it was too late to turn back now.

Whilst Philip tossed about through the night, Adèle did not sleep, but lay awake thinking and thinking of what had happened in two days. Then when morning came she still continued thinking. The day passed wearily in momentary expectation of Tom's

coming. Then the terrible scene of Philip's melancholy broke up the evening, and when she went to bed that night she shuddered as she lay down by her husband's side. And all through the night she kept as far from him as she could.

In the morning, as soon as Philip had gone on his round, Adèle sent a note to Tom with two words only written in it. It said simply—'Come quickly.'

Tom recognized the handwriting at once, and as soon as the messenger had gone, set out by a different road to Philip's house, and in half-an-hour was in the little dining-room. On the way he had been turning over in his mind a plan he had formed since many days. He had managed to save up about thirty pounds, and had carefully set this money by for the carrying out of his plan. He had been thinking about it all through the night, and had determined to persuade Adèle to go away with him at once. Then he received her message.

When Tom entered the room, he found

Adèle seated by the window. She sprang up to meet him, and clung to him tremblingly.

‘Oh, Tom!’ she cried, ‘I am afraid to stay here any more. Philip is mad, I know; and Allen saw all that night, and will tell Philip!’

Tom whispered a few words to her.

‘Oh, yes! Take me away! I am so frightened. Will you always love me, Tom, after this?’ she said.

‘My love! my darling! yes!’ cried he. And the poor infatuated woman clung tenderly to him, and kissed him fiercely.

‘What shall I do all the day? I am afraid to look at Philip. I tremble, Tom, so much when he speaks to me. Oh! you *will* take me away?’

‘Yes! Yes, I will!’ said Tom. ‘We will go over to Paris and be happy there together. You shall see how much I love you then.’

Afterwards Tom explained his plan. Adèle was to be ready to meet him at half-past eight, in order to drive to the station to catch

the night train to Dover, which started at nine. She was to meet him at the Willow lane, a narrow path that ran between a hedge and a shallow stream bordered by stunted willows, where he was to have a carriage ready to drive her to the station. She was to be thickly veiled, and her dress changed so as not to be recognized. She was like a child in Tom Darrell's grasp, and he gloated over the thought how soon now he should enjoy her beauty. Once she cried as this plan was unfolded, and her better nature suddenly regaining its power, she besought Tom to go and to leave her for ever. But he kissed her tears away and poured words of burning love into her ears, and again she succumbed to the fascination of his honeyed voice and his handsome face. And then Tom brought up against Philip all the pettish scolding, all the corrections and perpetual fault-finding of the beginning of their married life, and poor Adèle listened and got angry, and longed to be away from Philip so that he could not scold her any more. She listened to the voice of the

charmer, and under the fascinating spell forgot home, honour, friends, and duty.

Tom left her with these feelings, and hurried away to his usual private lessons.

And now the last link of this chain is being forged, and the blows of the hammers on the sounding anvil echo loud and long.

Tom no longer felt remorse. He was himself carried away by the force of the torrent he had by his own act let loose. He believed, as Adèle did, that Allen had seen all that had taken place in the dining-room that evening, and he shuddered to think that at any moment he might disclose all to his brother Philip. And Tom knew that though it was difficult to rouse Philip's anger, yet it was terrible once excited. He thought too that Philip's recent strange conduct was partly caused by madness, and in this idea he found yet another excuse for his own.

In fine, he threw his last scruples behind him, and determined to carry this adventure, this pastime, on to the very end.

After his morning lessons he walked into

the town and went to a livery stable-keeper, with whom he had had many dealings. The man knew him well, as one who paid like a lord, and was, besides, the brother of Doctor Darrell. But as he walked some one followed him and entered the livery stables, and hid himself partly behind a carriage while Tom spoke to the livery-man. It was Allen Heyson. In the morning Allen had noticed Philip's little maid-servant carrying a note in her hand. Always on the alert, he had instantly followed her, and from a short distance had seen her go to Tom's house by the church, and give in the note to the old housekeeper. Then he had waited patiently, and his patience was rewarded by seeing Tom come out hurriedly and walk quickly along the street. And Allen had started up to follow him, when suddenly another figure, a man with white clustering hair, had stepped before him and set off quickly after Tom Darrell. Allen remembered having seen the old man before, and also recollected that he always had seen him in the rear of Tom Darrell. This

fact struck him as something strange and mysterious, but without thinking more about it at the moment, he followed the old man.

As he did so he felt a strange chill come over him, and shivered from head to foot. He smiled as he thought, there's some one walking over my grave!

Tom walked quick, yet the old man never faltered, but kept on doggedly and steadily. Soon Allen began to frame some explanation of the fellow's conduct, and laughed actually at the odd ideas he conjured up. Then he saw Tom Darrell go into Philip's house, and the old man went into Mr Griffith's stable-yard, but Allen somehow felt that he was still watching from the inside. And Allen walked back a little way, sprang over a field-gate, and hid himself behind the palings, waiting silently and patiently for Tom to come out of Philip's house again.

He waited more than half an hour, then saw Tom came out, and as he passed Mr Griffith's the old man came out too, and followed him again. Then from a distance

Allen himself went after the strange pair, saw the usual manœuvre at the narrow alley, and walked on till he saw Tom enter the house of his first pupil. Then, as he knew Tom's daily round as well as he did himself, he posted himself near the house of his last morning pupil. All in good time he saw Tom come along, and when he emerged from the house after his lesson Allen set off again to follow him.

He felt as if the crisis of his life were drawing near, and occasionally he shivered without being able to understand why. All his watchfulness had been aroused into full play again, since he had seen the servant carry that note from Adèle to Tom. Although he could not possibly know its purport, yet he guessed that it was from Adèle. How he guessed this I cannot tell. I only give the details as I heard them. He followed Tom through several streets, and when he saw him stop at the livery-stables in High-street, he had hurried on, so as to enter directly after him, and had hidden himself behind a car-

riage. Then he heard Tom ask the livery-man whether he could have a pony-trap that evening at seven o'clock. He would want it for about two hours, and would bring it back himself. The man replied that Mr Darrell was very welcome to any of them that he liked to choose. So they moved away together from the place where they had been standing, and went to inspect some basket-carriages and low-built traps in the inner yard. Allen seized this opportunity to slip out of the yard unobserved. He was fully resolved not to miss being there again at seven in the evening.

That day when Philip came in about half-past one he found nothing ready for him. The cloth was laid, but no dinner cooked.

'Why how is this, Adèle?' he asked. 'You know that I am nearly always back between one and two; why on earth can't you have my dinner ready for me?'

Adèle sat unconcernedly reading a book.

'Are you deaf, Adèle?' cried Philip, who began to get angry.

‘Oh, no! I think the girl is cooking some dinner now,’ said Adèle.

‘What the devil is the matter with you, my dear?’ cried Philip. ‘You sit there as if you didn’t care one bit whether I have any dinner or not.’

Adèle put down her book and went out of the room saying—

‘Do be quiet! I’ll see about your dinner!’

Philip sat down and waited—five, ten, fifteen, twenty minutes passed, then the half-hour. He stood up with a very ugly look on his face. Philip was not handsome at any time, now he was almost hideous. He strode to the door, threw it open, and shouted—

‘Adèle! Is my dinner ready? I can’t wait any longer. It’s a perfect nuisance. Here! Jane!’

Jane came at the loud summons.

‘Where is your mistress?’ said Philip.

‘Missus is in the kitchen, sir,’ said Jane.

‘Oh! What is she doing?’ asked Philip.

‘She’s cooking some steak, sir, for your dinner,’ said Jane.

Philip started forward and burst into the kitchen, white with anger.

‘Whatever have you been doing all the morning, Adèle?’ cried he. ‘I don’t understand you a bit. You don’t seem to care at all about my simple comforts. Every minute I expect a message to go on to Mrs Walker’s, who has been grumbling all last night. And now! I’m damned if there’s a scrap of dinner ready when I want it. It’s really sickening.’

‘You will have it presently, without swearing, Philip,’ said Adèle in a provokingly calm voice.

Philip clenched his teeth together with anger, and abruptly left the kitchen, for fear that he should be unable to restrain his passion much longer. He had been working very hard all the morning without somehow being able to see his usual number of patients, and this had made him a little irritable.

Adèle inwardly had winced under every reproach Philip had addressed to her, and felt strangely pleased to think that he should be so angry with her for this last day. She

looked at everything with diseased eyes—and actually took a fierce joy in hearing Philip's irritated scolding. She had become quite reckless now, and only longed for the time to come when she should be free from this thralldom. She never had been able to think about the disgrace and shame of the life to which Tom wished to lead her. Her mind had been dazzled by the glamour of his impetuous words and his seemingly earnest love.

We have shown how skilfully he seized every moment to scoff at Philip, to deride his character, to teach Adèle to look upon her husband with indifferent eyes. And all had been done so gently and so insinuatingly that Adèle had insensibly been moulded to his opinions, to his wishes, to his love.

It is said that snakes will so fascinate small birds that at last the poor fluttering things drop blindly into their cruel jaws. So had Tom fascinated Adèle. She only thought as he thought, only saw as he saw, and loved or hated as he loved and hated.

After dinner Philip went off on his second round without kissing Adèle.

During the day-time Allen wandered about, thinking of how he could defeat the project Tom had formed. He could arrive at no good plan, for he could not make out what Tom might be meditating.

At last, however, he resolved to give up watching Tom, for he remembered that perhaps he could find some one to do this part of the work for him. He thought of the old white-haired man whom he had seen following Tom Darrell so many times. It was a strange idea this; could he have foreseen what would come of it he would have thrown it aside at once and done all himself.

However, he determined to watch Adèle, and if she should leave the house, to follow her wherever she went.

So towards three in the afternoon Allen walked over to Mr Griffith's, saw the groom, and through him sent a message to the gardener. As he gave his name, and John

Wright knew that Allen Heyson was a friend of Dr Darrell's, he came at once. Allen took him aside, and in a few words told him to go in the evening to the livery-stables in High Street, and wait for some one whom he would recognize.

John Wright looked at him steadily for a moment, then asked simply—

‘ You are not playing with me, sir ? ’

‘ Decidedly not,’ said Allen. And John Wright could not help putting faith in his word.

The day passed very slowly, but six o'clock came, then seven, at which time it was already nearly dark. Then at half-past seven Allen saw Philip's house-door open, and a woman come out and walk quickly up the street, without shutting the door after her or the garden-gate. Allen recognized Adèle's walk at once, and at a little distance followed her.

John Wright was standing near the livery-stables before seven o'clock, and saw Tom Darrell come up the street and, without seeing him, enter the yard. Tom had a large

valise in his hand, seemingly well filled. John Wright stooped, instantly Tom had passed into the yard, and took off his ordinary boots, which he replaced by his list-soled ones. Presently there was a sound of wheels, and in a little basket-carriage, with a thick rug well wrapped round his knees, Tom Darrell drove out of the stables, turned to the left, and set off at a smart trot.

John Wright darted after him and soon caught him up, then fell into a steady long swinging stride that kept him within twenty feet of the basket-carriage. Tom drove straight on for about half a mile, then turned again to the left, and drove along the Dover road for about another half-mile, and suddenly took a sharp turn to the right and stopped in a narrow lane.

The lamps of the carriage threw a faint light round, and their reflection was seen in a narrow stream by the road-side. On the other side was a hedge. John Wright sprang over a low gate, and running along hid himself behind the hedge-row. He had just heard a

sound of footsteps, and he hid himself till they should pass. He had a knotty thick cudgel in his hand, such a one as he had cut long ago in Shirley Wood. The footsteps came nearer, and peering through the gloom John Wright could discern the outline of a woman's dress. And he prepared to leap forward.

Tom heard the footsteps and cried, 'Est-ce toi?' and a voice answered, 'Oui, c'est moi.' Tom then came and took Adèle's hand.

But at this moment a man ran up, stood between them, and pushed Adèle on one side, and at the same instant there came a crashing sound from the hedge-row, a man sprang forward with a stick in his hand and struck savagely at the man who was standing at Adèle's side.

All this happened in far less time than I take to write this account.

The blow was well aimed, and the man fell to the ground. Then, with a triumphant cry, John Wright uplifted his cudgel and struck again, then threw it down and rushed away. Adèle screamed, and fell to the ground

fainting as she heard the blows struck. But it was ordained that John Wright should not escape; for suddenly Tom ran along after him, and presently a hated voice shouted to him—‘Stop!’

The miserable man remembered the voice at once. He had heard it speaking lying words to poor Katie. He heard it, knew it, and groaned in utter despair. Again had his vengeance fallen short of the mark. Then suddenly he stopped, waited, and stood like a wild beast, driven to bay. The bank of clouds that had made the night darker parted just as Tom Darrell drew near to the father of Katie Wright, and the pure light of the moon shone full on the two faces.

John Wright saw the detested face, and with a yell, like the cry of a savage animal, flew at his enemy. As he had no cudgel now, he dug his nails fiercely into Tom Darrell’s face. His onslaught was so violent and sudden that Tom slipped and fell. John Wright fell with him, and clutched him by the throat with one hand, whilst with the other he tore

savagely at his enemy's face, dragging the hairs from his moustaches and *Impériale*, and ploughing up his flesh with his horny nails.

The agony of this attack was so horrible that for a moment Tom lay motionless at his enemy's mercy. A name hissed between the old man's teeth told him who it was attacking him. For he cried savagely — 'I'll spoil the handsome face that led Katie Wright astray !'

Then a wild despair came over Tom ; with a violent effort he threw his enemy off his body, and though his eyes were half blinded by the blood streaming from his forehead, and he could taste its horrible savour touching his lips, he threw himself on the old man, and pinned him to the earth. Then John Wright felt that all was over. Held in that fierce grasp the old man, weak, worn, armed only with the momentary factitious strength derived from his desire for revenge, had no chance. He was powerless now in Tom Darrell's grasp, and could only glare up at him with all the hatred that had been growing and

intensifying within him all the past long and weary months.

But Allen Heyson had not been killed by the blows that John Wright had struck him. He had fallen into a pool of water in the road, and the cold and wet soon revived him. He stood up and could feel something warm trickling down his face and neck, and raising his hand to his head, it came and touched his hair soddened with red fluid, that had a peculiar smell, and clung to his fingers. He felt very dizzy and faint, and stood a moment swaying backwards and forwards like a drunken man. Then by a powerful effort of his will he steadied himself and looked around him. The first thing he saw was the pony-trap, with its lighted lamps. This made him instantly remember Adèle.

He peered round and saw her lying in the road. Then all the grandeur of this man's character shone forth. He felt as if he were dying, yet he remembered his resolve, he gave himself up to his brave love. All his devotion to Adèle returned at this supreme

moment. He staggered forward to where she lay, bent down, and with a mighty effort raised her in his arms, and carried her to the little basket-carriage. He felt the blood well out of the wound in his head, and heard it fall in swift following drops on Adèle's dress. He placed her in the carriage, got in himself, and seized the reins. By a vigorous effort he turned the pony's head. One wheel dipped in the stream, so narrow was the lane, but a sharp cut of the whip sent the animal bounding forward, and presently the pony dashed past Tom and John Wright, struggling on the ground.

On with a deliberate purpose, an iron hand grasping the reins. The night air, as they rushed swiftly on, revived Allen for a few minutes, then he felt slowly coming over him a horrible faintness. Just at this moment the jolting revived Adèle. Allen felt her move, and called to her in a voice of agony to sit up. He lashed the pony furiously, and the animal galloped fiercely on. Allen was becoming blinded and maddened by the warm blood

streaming over his face. The houses flew past them street after street. Suddenly a well-known red lamp gleamed along a street, and with a shout of joy Allen lashed the pony, and they tore along till they reached Philip's house. With a wonderful effort, Allen got out. Adèle took the reins. Allen tottered up to the house-door, knocked a loud knock, and then, faint from loss of blood, fell insensible on the gravel-path. He had taken Adèle back home!

Philip himself, hearing the sound of wheels stop at his house and the loud knock, came to open the door. The first thing he saw was Allen stretched on the gravel-path. Then a light footstep sounded, and Adèle came in at the gate,—a man was holding the pony's head.

When she saw Allen covered with blood, lying on the pathway, and felt that she was at home, a wonderful revulsion of feeling came over her. She saw Allen's devotion all at once in its true light, she comprehended the sacrifices he had made for her, and she

suddenly contrasted it with Tom's love; and with a wild cry she fell on her knees by her brave devoted lover and called in agony—

‘Oh, my God! How I am punished. Oh, Philip, help him! He will die. Oh, God! pity me; do not let me have this to bear!’

At her voice Philip came forward and raised Allen in his arms, and carried him straight up the stairs into his bed-room. Adèle seized the lamp that always stood on the little rack in the passage and followed him.

‘Get me my surgery scissors,’ said Philip; ‘and bring up some adhesive plaster.’

Adèle rushed down and quickly returned. Meanwhile Philip washed the head and got most of the blood and filth away. Then he clipped the hair close all round the wound, which gaped every time he touched the head. Then he tore up a piece of linen rag and despatched Adèle for the Tincture of Steel. Of this he poured a quantity on the rag and applied it to the wound. The blood soon

ceased to flow so quickly, and presently Philip was able to strap the wound roughly. All this had taken but a few minutes, for Philip thought rightly that the first thing to do was to stanch the flow of blood. Then he sent Adèle for some brandy, and adding about half as much water, he gave Allen nearly a wine-glassful. The potent fluid revived him, and he opened his eyes.

He saw Adèle's face wet with tears, and a strange look in her eyes as they met his glance. Philip was holding his friend's hand, and watching the beating of the pulse that was very feeble. All the time he had said nothing to his wife, beyond asking for this thing or that, or telling her to fetch him the things he wanted.

But when Allen opened his eyes, Philip let go his hand and turned to Adèle.

'Where have you been since eight o'clock, Adèle?' he asked.

Allen answered for her—

'Mrs Darrell has been at our house!'

'Is that true, Adèle?' asked Philip.

‘ Oh, I have been nearly mad, Philip ! ’ she answered ; ‘ do not ask me now ! ’

Philip looked at her very sadly, and said nothing more about the matter. Presently he turned to Allen.

‘ How do you feel now ? ’ he asked, taking his hand again.

‘ Very weak and faint, ’ said Allen, feebly pressing Philip’s hand. Philip gave him some more brandy-and-water, which helped to revive him again.

Adèle’s eyes were blind with tears as she stood by the bed-side. All the past came back to her, and she saw the frightful gulf from which Allen had snatched her. Dimly she perceived how weak and culpable she had been, but also became conscious that if she had been partly deceived, the temptation had been very subtly placed before her.

She saw brave noble Allen Heyson stretched before her, his face pale with the hue of death. Only his true love looked forth out of his clear gray eyes. Adèle could feel it wrapping itself around her, like a mantle of safety.

The room was very quiet, so still that Allen's laboured breathing made a noise in it.

Presently Adèle's heart seemed to burst with the emotion that the sight of Allen produced. She fell on her knees by the bed-side, crying softly. Allen's left hand was hanging down by the bed. She took it and covered it with kisses, and he could feel her warm tears falling on his wrist and hand. He tried to draw it away, but either he was too weak, or else Adèle held it too tightly. He could feel a gentle stupor coming on; it was sleep creeping over him. His eyes closed, and presently his regular breathing announced that he slept.

Philip relinquished his hand, and cautiously examined the head. The wound still bled, but only slightly. He motioned to Adèle to get up, and she obeyed. Philip placed the lamp where its light could not fall across Allen's eyes, and turned it down low. As they were leaving the room, Adèle stopped, laying her hand on her husband's arm. Her face was full of grief, of shame, of repentance, as she looked up to him.

‘ May I stay ? ’ she asked.

Philip understood the expression of remorse in the face, and somehow his suspicions were instantly quenched. He nodded gravely and said, ‘ Yes.’

Then Adèle returned to the bed-side, knelt down humbly, and clasped Allen’s hand again in hers.

He slept calmly on. Who knows, perhaps his soul was soothed by Adèle’s tears falling on his hand. He may have felt, dimly and vaguely, that a new, purer life was beginning for him. During that short sleep, as Adèle knelt by him, who can tell what purification passed over them both?—the one, by the attainment of the end of his devotion ; the other, by the searing, scorching influence of grief and remorse. Who can tell ?

Only God can answer these questions.

CHAPTER XI.

OLD ENEMIES FACE TO FACE—AS THROUGH A MIST—THE
BLANKNESS OF DESPAIR—JOHN WRIGHT IN PRISON—TOM
DARRELL LEAVES ENGLAND FOR AMERICA.

WHEN John Wright uttered the words, 'I'll spoil the handsome face that led Katie Wright astray,' Tom had instantly recognized the voice and the look of the eyes. His thoughts flew back to the morning in Shirley Wood, and he could almost hear again the savage voice telling Katie to stand aside that he might kill him. Yes; now at last the enemies were face to face! But God had thrust his might between them, and Mad Revenge had been foiled once more. Once or twice John Wright strove to set himself free, but Tom's hands and arms seemed of iron; they never once bent or yielded to the sudden

furious efforts. Then, seeing his impotence, Wright ceased to struggle, and lay motionless. But Tom could not make his tongue cease, and, in a wild flood of rough eloquence and pathos, poor Katie's father poured the vials of his hatred and curses upon Tom Darrell. The old man's voice rang out like a clarion, and to his dying day Tom Darrell could not shake off the memory of that night. The curses rang in his ears for ever after, and he always felt pursued by them. He would gladly have thrust his hand into the man's mouth, but he dared not let go his arms, lest he should renew his violent efforts to set himself free.

The moonlight fell full upon them as the clouds parted, and showed him John Wright's face, haggard, wild, and unutterably fierce. It was more like the face of a wild animal than the face of a man, and yet Tom saw in it a vague resemblance to Katie Wright that made him shudder with a strange chill.

He could feel that his face was covered with blood, it smarted horribly, and he longed

to wipe it, but dared not let go his hold for a single moment. So he shook his head fiercely and sent a little spray of blood-drops on each side of him. Some of them fell upon John Wright's face and looked horrible, in contrast with his deathly pallor.

Just at this moment there came a sound of wheels. Tom looked up, and as through a mist saw the pony-carriage, with Allen Heyson driving, and Adèle lying in it, pass him at a furious pace. Tom swore a terrible oath, and clutched John Wright with a more violent grasp.

He understood it all in an instant. Allen had followed them, John Wright had followed them, and here was the result. The one balked of his revenge, the other of his criminal love. Who was least guilty?

For a few minutes Tom Darrell felt his mind whirl, and he was afraid that he should faint. All was finished now. Adèle lost to him—Philip lost to him—all the world would know of Katie Wright. His soul was full of the blankness of despair. His thoughts came

sometimes swift and flowing, then slow and dragging, but always the same cry re-echoed from his soul. All lost—Love, Friendship, Hope. Disgrace, moral exile, awaited him. He felt at once that he could never face the sneers of his friends, the open insults of his enemies. He felt certain that Allen would disclose all to Philip, perhaps be loved by Adèle when he was gone.

The thought was very bitter to him. But presently he seemed to have made up his mind what to do, for he raised his voice and shouted for help. No voice answered his, the silence was unbroken. He had chosen an unfrequented spot. Again and again he shouted. Then at last a faint shout answered his call, he perceived a lantern shining along the road, and soon a country policeman came up to where Tom was holding John Wright to the ground.

‘What is the matter?’ said the constable.

‘This man has assaulted me,’ said Tom.

‘Look at my face. I give him in charge.’

‘Oh! that’s been his game, has it?’ cried

the constable. 'Why, I know this man!' he added. 'Aint you Dr Griffith's gardener?'

John Wright gave a short answer in the affirmative. He had no reason to conceal who he was now. He thought that he could see the finger of God in this perpetual failure, and with sullen indifference submitted to his fate. The constable handcuffed him and made him stand up.

'Now, you'll please walk along to the prison!' said the constable. John Wright obeyed without a word. On the way he was thinking that all his hopes were gone, his life ended. But he also thought that although he had failed to kill Tom Darrell, yet he could tell all that he had done to Katie Wright.

That day in Philip Darrell's garden, when he had seen his enemy standing at the window with Adèle, he had noticed the look on their faces. And as he walked painfully by the constable's side, with Tom Darrell behind him, all these ideas came to him, of a new way of taking his revenge, or rather of punishing Tom. He did not think much of

himself now. He was thinking of his child ; and strangely there rose within him the memory of the resemblance there was in Adèle's and Katie's voice, and the many kind words and gentle actions he had received at Adèle's hands came back in a flood to soften his heart—unconsciously he was crying as he thought of Adèle. He, too, had seen Allen drive by in the pony-carriage, but only dimly guessed who it was lying on the seat in front. Many a time had he watched Tom and Adèle, and as he remembered Adèle's kindness, so he resolved that never a word against her should cross his lips. So they walked silently on through the streets, till they came to the jail.

The constable turned to call Tom into the Police Office, where he could lodge his complaint. But Tom Darrell had disappeared. The constable called out—'Sir!' once or twice, but no one answered. However he pushed John Wright in before him, and told the Inspector what the complaint was.

‘Who gave the fellow in charge?’ said the Inspector.

The constable was puzzled, as he did not know Tom Darrell; so he said—

‘I really don’t know who the gentleman was!’

‘Then how I can enter this complaint is difficult to understand. Here’s a man charged with an assault. Whom did he attack? You, who arrested him, don’t know!’

Suddenly the prisoner spoke.

‘I assaulted Mr Tom Darrell, the organist of St Mary’s Church!’ said John Wright, in a firm, steady voice.

‘Well—I never!’ said the Inspector. ‘You’re a rum chap.’ Then he turned methodically to a book and made an entry. ‘What’s your name?’ he presently asked.

‘John Wright, gardener at Dr Griffith’s,’ was the answer.

‘Eh? What did you say? John Wright?’

‘Yes; my name is John Wright.’

‘Good God! I say, Joe,’ cried the In-

spector, 'just look at that bill over the mantel-piece.'

Joe took a candle, and did as he was ordered.

'Read it out, man,' cried the Inspector; 'every word.'

Joe began, and John Wright stood listening. It was the placard offering a reward for his apprehension, as the murderer of his daughter, Katie Wright. The wretched man trembled with horror as he listened. 'Oh, then, this was the end of all!' His head sunk on his breast, and he groaned aloud.

The Inspector and the constable looked at him with horror. His grief seemed to them the proof of his guilt. For awhile no one spoke. The silence could be felt almost. Then the Inspector rang a little bell, and a policeman came in, and stood ready.

'Put this man in cell No. 3. He is dangerous,' said the Inspector.

With that John Wright was led away and thrust into a cell. They did not take off his handcuffs, as the Inspector had said 'Dan-

gerous,' and that always meant that they were to be, or to remain, handcuffed. Then John Wright heard the bolts shoot into their sockets, and the sound of the policeman's footsteps died quickly away. Silence reigned in the prison. And John Wright fell on the stone floor of his cell, sobbing bitterly.

His life had been so simple and happy at Shirley before Tom Darrell came to disturb it. The memory of the home broken up, of his deserted wife, of the trials he had since undergone, were contrasted with the previous happiness. He thought of Katie again as a child, playing by him and climbing on his knee to kiss his rough, hard cheek. Then he saw her as when she had nursed him through his long famine-fever. And all that had since happened passed before him. Oh, what a dreary retrospect it was!

There came to him again the doubts that had once beset him, as to the right he arrogated to revenge his daughter.

This poor man had but dim notions of

Right and Wrong. His mind was like a field overgrown with weeds and tares, that choked the few grains of wheat by keeping from them the life and warmth of the sunshine.

No light had ever penetrated the dense ignorance of this labourer. The utmost Education had ever done for him was to teach him long ago to read painfully and with difficulty. He soon forgot the slender knowledge he had of writing, and afterwards disuse and hard work had stiffened his fingers, so that he had been unable, and perhaps averse, even to make the endeavour to write.

Education had taught him how to read, but there it had stopped. No one had ever attempted to teach this man *how to think*. No one had ever even said to him—

‘Look up and walk upright! Remember that thou art a man. Think that thou art one of the great Race, equal in worth, in thy Creator’s eyes, to any of thy fellow-creatures. Same form, same bone, same muscles, same flesh, same blood! God dwells in thee, as much as within the soul of the greatest king-

He had never been taught that grand maxim of human brotherhood—‘Do unto others as thou wouldst have others do unto thee.’ Perhaps he could not have understood its full meaning even if he had heard it. Dimly and vaguely through his life he had been conscious that beyond him, beyond all men, transcending all in power, there was a *Some-thing* or *Some-one*. But this idea was indistinct, and had never taken definite form and substance in his poor brain. He had been a labourer all his life, and talked as labourers usually do talk. Oaths, whose meaning he never understood, had formed part and parcel of every word he uttered. With his comrades he spoke as they did. Where we should say—

‘What a nice time we have had’—John Wright or his mates would say, ‘Didn’t we have a bloody lark!’—‘Damn’ and ‘God damn’—‘Blast’—‘Curse’—‘By God!’—and other words and oaths too foul to be written down were commonly bandied about among them.

In this life had this poor wretch grown up to be a man. What wonder that his only idea of justice should be retaliation, and his notion of the God-head as of a something to be afraid of!

This is no over-drawn picture, exaggerated to strike the reader's sense of disgust more acutely. It is a simple truth. Thousands of men are growing up like John Wright, as fierce, as savage, and as ignorant.

The poor man himself felt something of this as he lay sobbing and moaning. He felt that his life had been misordered and wasted—a something that might have saved him, and saved Katie, had been wanting. The images of the past rose up before him again, and in the darkness of that prison God sent a ray of pure light to the benighted creature; one of so many that God creates so fair and beautiful, and that society crushes and deforms.

John Wright suddenly remembered the words of a hymn he had been taught when a child, and as he repeated them, the old

melody returned also, and presently in a low sad voice he sang—

‘ There’s a River ever running,
Running onward to the Sea!
Bright and gleaming are its Waters,
Running on away from me !

‘ I have waited by that River,
Running onward to the Sea !
I have waited sad and lonely
For a boat to come for me !

‘ But now I wait no longer,
For the boat is taking me
On down the running River
To the wondrous far-off Sea ;
On down the running River,
Onward to Eternity !’

Who shall say, No! to this simple faith. That is all the prayer, if prayer it can be called, that John Wright could ever remember having learnt. And, poor wretch! even of this he only dimly caught the sense. But the words and the melody took him back through the long past years, and softened his heart with the memory of his childhood; and tired out with the fatigues and vigils of many days, John Wright laid his head on the hard

stone and slept. Although the cell was not quite dark, he had paid no heed to the truckle-bed in the far corner.

Yes ! he slept with the lingering melody of the words of the hymn echoing in his ears.

Who knows, perhaps God had at last recognized this poor fellow as one of His creatures, and had sent His Angel, under the guise of a childish hymn, to comfort and soothe this miserable bruised heart. Perhaps, also, this was John Wright's cry of Repentance and Remorse. And his Guardian Angel has carried it up to God !

We have shown that Tom Darrell was not forthcoming when the constable called his name. He had thought better than to allow his name to be given in. He did not know that John Wright knew it so well.

So as they passed the street where he lived he slipped behind and walked quickly to his little house. It was half-past ten when he reached it, for he heard the hour striking in St Mary's Church. He let himself in and ran up to his room. He remembered that he had

left some papers on his table that he did not wish others to see. So he went up and tore them in pieces and burnt them in the fire-grate. Then he sat down wearily. The moonlight poured into the room. But he got up again presently and lit a candle. Then held his face to the looking-glass. He shuddered as he saw it, and a painful sigh burst from his heart. He felt chilled with a terrible dread as he looked at the accomplishment of John Wright's threat.

His face was scarred from chin to forehead. Part of his moustache had been *torn* away, leaving a rough jagged scar on his upper lip. Part of his *Impériale* also had been *torn* away, the wound was still bleeding. He was hideous from the scars and the marks of dried blood on his face. He put the candle on the table, drew his chair near and sat down; then leaning his head on his hands, he gazed at his torn face with a horrible fascination. From time to time deep sighs burst from his heart. That was all. Oh! John Wright had done his work well at last. It would be far more

horrible to have to live with that scarred face than to have been struck down insensible and killed by blows from a stick. Tom Darrell could not for a moment draw himself away from the mirror—it held him by a fearful attraction. But suddenly he rose, and went to the mantel-shelf. There he took up a daguerreotype that he had had taken in America, only a year ago. Then he returned to his seat, placed the daguerreotype before the glass, and looked alternately at the reflection of his scarred, blood-stained features and the portrait. They were like, and yet horribly dissimilar.

He shuddered again, and got up; went to his wash-stand, poured some water into the basin, and sponged the blood away from his face. This caused him exquisite suffering, but he persevered, looking from time to time in the glass, to see whether it was all gone. He got it nearly all off, and looked again.

The scars remained, and would never leave his face so long as he lived. John Wright

had done his work too well! His enemy will be horrible to look upon for years to come, perhaps for ever. Blood could be washed away, those scars will be indelible. His moustache and *Impériale* looked one-sided and strange, and pained him. Tom went to the wash-stand, made a lather with cold water from his shaving-soap, found one razor which he had forgotten in the drawer, and with a face smarting from the application of the soap to open wounds, deliberately lathered his chin and lip, and shaved off the remaining moustache and beard. He was pleased he had done it, for certainly he was less revoltingly hideous. Then thoroughly tired out, he blew out the candle, and threw himself all dressed upon his bed, and fell asleep. His plans were all formed, and only needed carrying into execution. He had determined to leave England, the place was become hateful to him, or rather he dreaded to stay in it now, for he feared that all his recent vices and follies would come to light. He had kept

his money in his purse, and so was well able to feel a little independent as to what he should do.

At early morning he got off the bed, sluiced his face with cold water, and dried it gently, for he winced every time the towel touched his skin; smoothed his hair back with his hands, and looked at his watch. It was half-past six. He sat down by his table and leant his head upon his hand, thinking—of what? Who can tell?

Presently he stood up, put on his hat, and going softly down-stairs went to the little larder, where he found some cold meat and bread and butter; he got a knife and cut some, and stood there as he ate it. Then came away, leaving the crumbs as mute witnesses on the floor and bottom shelf.

He was wiping his mouth with his handkerchief as he walked to the door. The church clock struck seven as he opened it. On the steps he saw something black—it was his valise; how it got there I do not know, nor did Tom Darrell ever learn. Perhaps

Adèle sent it back, or more probably the livery stable-keeper did. At all events there it was, and Tom was very glad to find it, as all his clothes were packed in it. And there were two or three packages of papers he would have been sorry for any one to have but himself.

So he closed the door gently after him, caught up his valise, and walked briskly to the station. It was a chilly, raw morning, and a heavy dew was falling. It made him shiver all over, and he quickened his pace, trying to get warm.

'Twenty minutes' walking brought him to the station, and five minutes after he had taken his place in the train, which soon steamed out on its way to London.

At a few minutes to ten Tom Darrell stood on the railway platform at London Bridge. He was undecided as to what he should do. As he stood there, people passing stared at him and shuddered as they turned their eyes away. He noticed this, and it cut him to the quick. He had been so used to

see people turn round to have a second look at his handsome face, and for the moment he had forgotten the terrible scars John Wright had left upon it. As he turned aside sickened and sad, he saw an advertisement on the wall. The paper said that the 'Virginia' would sail from Victoria Docks for New York, touching at Havre by the way. Apply to Messrs Frantz and Brown, Agents, 57, Fenchurch Street, for rates of passage. The date of sailing was fixed for that very day. Tom made up his mind at once, and walked over the bridge, up Gracechurch Street, and made his way to 57, Fenchurch Street. There he took a steerage passage to New York, found his way to the Docks, and took his berth on the noble Ship Virginia. He was just in time; for at three o'clock the anchor was raised, and they steamed away down the river. At half-past five they stopped at Gravesend for an hour to take in goods and passengers. Then set off again. Tom gazed wistfully and sadly at the shores. He was taking his last look at England. Presently

darkness came on, and from the villages on the banks shone twinkling lights. Then they passed the Nore Light and gained the open sea.

The die was cast. Tom Darrell henceforth was an exile from the land of his birth. He vanished into night, without bidding any one farewell, without finding any one to grasp his hand in friendship before he went ; and no voice of kindred came to bid him ' God speed.'

CHAPTER XII.

BREAKING THE NEWS—'MY BOY, MY ALLEN!'—A RESTLESS NIGHT — ALLEN BECOMES DELIRIOUS — 'SHE IS VERY LOVELY, MOTHER!'—'ONLY MY LIFE! NOT MY LOVE!'—ADÈLE'S REMORSE—PHILIP HEARS OF JOHN WRIGHT'S ARREST.

WHEN Philip left his wife kneeling by the bed on which Allen lay, he went down-stairs, thrust on his soft felt hat, and telling the servant where he was going, walked straight to the Woodlands.

He found the family assembled in the dining-room. Mr Heyson and Edith were practising a duo for piano and violin, Mrs Heyson was knitting, Florry was reading, on a little stool by the fire. Philip's heart sank and became quite cold as he looked at the happy domestic scene. The cheerful fire, the

soft light from the lamp and from the piano candles, the pure kind faces of his true friends, all formed a beautiful picture.

Mrs Heyson stood up as Philip entered the room. She noticed his pale sad face at once, and when he went to shake hands with her, she drew back suddenly with horror. Philip's hands were covered with blood. He looked at them, and sighed.

'What is the matter, Philip?' cried Mrs Heyson. At her voice her husband turned round, and so did Florry and Edith. They came to shake hands, but Philip held his out to them, showing them the blood upon them.

'I forgot to wash them,' he said.

'Why, you look quite ill, Philip!' said Mr Heyson. 'Has anything happened?'

'I come to bring you bad news,' said Philip, 'and it nearly breaks my heart to have to tell them.'

'What is it? Oh, tell me at once!' said Mrs Heyson.

'Is Allen ill, or hurt?'

Philip looked at her with brimming eyes.

‘Oh, dear Madame,’ he cried, ‘I am afraid he will die!’

‘Who? Who will die?’ asked she.

‘Allen,’ replied Philip.

‘Oh, my boy! my Allen!’ cried Mrs Heyson, and she sank fainting in her husband’s arms.

‘Good God! Philip. What is it? How did it happen?’ cried Mr Heyson.

Philip broke down as he told him all he knew. It was necessarily incomplete, since Philip had no clue to the real truth.

Mrs Heyson suddenly drew herself out of her husband’s arms and walked out of the room.

‘Go after her, Edith!’ cried her father. Both girls were weeping silently. Edith got up as her father spoke and went after her mother.

Philip’s heart felt ready to break—such grief was terrible to witness for him whose tidings had caused it.

Presently Mrs Heyson returned dressed, and with a shawl round her. Without saying a word Mr Heyson fetched his hat, he

understood his wife's wish at once. The girls sat down by each other, and Florry pillowed her head in her sister's lap and wept bitterly. She had been Allen's favourite sister. Philip saw all this, and his tears fell as fast as theirs did. Then he muttered a good-bye, and went out with Mrs Heyson and her husband. They walked in silence to Philip's house. He opened the door for them, and preceded them up the stairs, to show them the room. Mrs Heyson gave a look of gratitude when she saw where he had put Allen.

Adèle was still kneeling by the bed-side. She did not move as they came in. The poor mother took the lamp and held it so that she could see her boy. His pale face almost made her scream. As she turned away with a smothered groan Allen opened his eyes and recognized her.

'Mother!' he whispered. She heard him and put the lamp down, and came to him full of grief and love.

He smiled up at her, and she bent down and kissed his pale lips. Philip came forward

and took his wrist in his hand. The pulse was irregular and quick. Allen's father now came up to the bed. He took his son's hand and bent down and kissed him as his mother had.

'Thanks! Father!' murmured Allen. He could see Adèle kneeling by his bed, and felt that she still held his hand in hers. He did not attempt to draw it away. Perhaps it gave him some taste of happiness. He was quiet for awhile, then called feebly to Philip.

'How am I now, Philip? I feel that I should like to be undressed!' Philip came forward and took his hand again.

'Perhaps it would be more comfortable for you, old fellow,' said Philip; 'and I think you could bear it if it was done slowly.'

'Please do it, then,' said Allen. Mrs Heyson turned to Philip, and motioned him to come out of the room with her.

'Could Allen be taken to his own home?' she asked.

'Not at present,' said Philip; 'the movement of a carriage, or of a chair, would perhaps

cause the wound to bleed again. We must wait.'

Then Philip added—

'Let me and Mr Heyson undress him. I am used to that sort of thing, you know, and can do better without ladies by.'

'Very well,' she answered; 'only call me as soon as he is comfortable.' And with that like a brave sensible woman she went downstairs and waited patiently.

Philip fetched a clean night-shirt of his own, and some towels, and returned to the room. He touched Adèle, who looked up to him, her face pale with weeping.

'Go down to Mrs Heyson, my dear, for the present,' said Philip. Adèle obeyed without a word.

Then, with infinite care and tenderness, Philip proceeded to undress his friend. Some blood had trickled down his neck, and had dried on his back. Philip sponged it gently away. It took them an hour before they could get his clothes off, and put on the night-shirt. Philip was in a fever of dread lest the

wound should bleed. But their care prevented this, and at last Allen could lay his head on a cool pillow, feeling very comfortable. They had taken everything off but his merino drawers. When it was all done, Allen only complained of feeling very tired, and that his head ached violently. Philip made him put out his tongue,—it was furred. His skin, too, was rather hot, and but slightly moist. Fever was coming on very quickly. Philip went down and told his mother and Adèle that they could go up to Allen now, and then went into his little surgery, and made a mixture of Chlorate of Potash and Acetate of Ammonia, with a little laudanum and Chloric Ether. This he took up with him, and gave Allen a sixth part of the eight-ounce mixture.

Adèle was seated by the bed on one side, and Allen's mother was on the other. He was dozing restlessly a few minutes after he had taken the dose of medicine. Presently he lay quite still, and appeared to be asleep.

His mother rose and went to where Philip

and her husband were standing. 'He is asleep, dear,' she said. 'Will you go back to the girls; they will be so anxious to hear the truth?'

'Yes, I will go back,' answered Mr Heyson. Then turning to Philip—'What shall I tell them, Philip?' he asked.

'Say that Allen is dangerously wounded, but that he was sleeping calmly when you came away,' replied Philip.

Mr Heyson walked gently up to the bed, looked for a few moments at his boy, then turned and went out of the room. His wife hurried after him, and begged him to go to bed when he got home, as she herself would watch through the night. He consented, as he knew he had to work as usual the next day. And so he walked home very down-hearted to tell his other two children how ill their brother was.

The mother came back and took her seat again. Suddenly she looked at Adèle, and remembered that she had said nothing to her

yet. So she came round and took her hand, and stooped to kiss her; but Adèle averted her head, crying in a sad low voice—

‘Oh, no! I am not worthy of it! Do not kiss me now!’

Allen’s mother quivered as Adèle said these words, but did not insist upon it, and went back to her place. It was then past eleven. Philip said he should go to lie down, and bade them wake him instantly if anything occurred in the night.

Adèle refused to leave the bed-side, and Philip, dimly comprehending her feelings, did not make any opposition to her wish. Only Mrs Heyson wondered at it. But Adèle said not a single word.

Presently the house became quite still; the lamp was turned low, and these two poor women, one torn by maternal grief, and the other crushed by a never-silent remorse, kept their sad and lonely vigil through the night.

The hours dragged by them their weary length. The sick man turned from time to

time restlessly, and muttered words they could not understand. Towards two o'clock he became very restless, and once tried to sit up. His mother gave him another dose of medicine, and presently he dozed off again. But only for a short time; then he moaned and cried, and suddenly sat up in the bed and stretched out his arms, calling in a sweet, soft voice—'My love! My Adèle!' But the effort exhausted him, and he fell back heavily on his pillow. Mrs Heyson was crying. Adèle started up a minute after this, and ran out of the room. She came back with Philip, who looked very anxious as he took up the lamp and examined Allen's head.

'Oh!' he cried. 'It is bleeding! Fetch some warm water, Adèle, quick!'

Adèle ran down-stairs, and presently returned with a jug of hot water from the kitchen boiler. Then very carefully and gently Philip removed the plaster bit by bit. It was not bleeding much, but still sufficient to cause anxiety. Presently he succeeded in strapping the wound much tighter than be-

fore, and little by little the hæmorrhage ceased again. But Allen had lain with wide open eyes all the time Philip had been doing his head. He was looking full at him, but the eyes showed no recognition. Then presently he turned away, and began to speak. First softly, then loudly. Adèle was holding his hand, and her tears brimmed over, and ran down her cheeks quickly.

Allen looked and smiled at her. ‘Don’t cry, old soul,’ he said, ‘don’t cry!’ It was the pet name he used to give his mother.

Then he began again, oh! so wistfully and tenderly—‘Mother! she is very lovely. But there is no hope for me! Adèle loves Philip; she will not understand me!’

Here Adèle sank on her knees by the bed. But Allen went on, always under the delusion that he was talking to his mother. Poor Mrs Heyson listened in unspeakable grief. Allen was talking again; she bent forward to hear. ‘I never told you before, old soul, because I knew it was no use; but now I think I had better tell you all before I go away.’

Adèle was sobbing.

Philip felt the tears gathering in his eyes. He came near to the bed to hear his friend. He knew how often delirious people tell all the truth about themselves. And he listened as Allen told, with many a pause between, all the history of his devoted love for Adèle. But strangely Adèle never heard him speak a word of Tom Darrell. He appeared to have forgotten all that. Perhaps God allowed him mercifully to do so.

Soon Allen dozed again for a few minutes, but only to wake up as delirious as before. He seemed to be fighting and struggling with some one, and moaned as if in pain. Then he cried with a strange exultation, 'They have taken only my life! Not my love!'

Towards dawn the delirium increased. Philip gave a third dose of the mixture. Then every hour he gave a dose, and it seemed to have the effect of quieting Allen's ravings. But soon the fever grew almost unmanageable, and the delirious ravings were harrowing to hear. Always he raved of his love for Adèle;

and told how he had watched over her with such tender devotion.

Who can tell how much poor Adèle suffered during that night? Her eyes were red with weeping; her heart must have wept too, for the dawning light found her haggard and worn, and with deep lines of sorrow in her face. All through the night her prayer had been—‘ Oh, God! Spare Allen’s life!’

When she heard him, still holding her hand, rave of his devotion to her, and became fully alive to the magnificent love this man had felt, her heart grew chilled at the thought of how unworthy she had been of it all. Her neck and face were flushed with shame as she listened—shame for her own unbridled passions, remorse at the terrible consequences of her lapse from the pathway of duty. And all the time her husband stood by, with tearful eyes, and listened to the tale of noble love. And Allen’s mother, too, heard it all, and bent down to kiss her cheek. That kiss seared her soul like the touch of a hot iron to

her flesh. It was such a kiss of pardon, and yet of terrible reproach.

No one can understand how much Adèle suffered. God alone knows all this, and pardons freely when the repentance is sincere.

And Adèle truly repented. Her remorse was incessant, and her bitter tears and fervent prayers for Allen's safety were earnest and sincere.

Poor child! Poor child! All thy passions are quenched by that salt flood. Thou wilt arise from this suffering, purified and repentant, and stronger than ever thou wert before!

In the morning, about eight, Mr Heyson and the girls came to Philip's. They went up and wept to see the change that had come over their brother. But it was less than that which had taken place in Adèle. She was haggard and wan from grief, remorse, and fatigue. There was no lustre in her eyes, no colour in her cheeks or on her lips. Edith

and Florry kissed her tenderly ; they saw that Allen's hand was tightly clasping hers.

How they had wished to see them love each other in the old days. But God had ordained otherwise, and they did not know that Allen had never ceased to love Adèle. They did not hear all till some years after, when their grief had been hallowed and softened by Time.

Philip went over to Mr Griffith and brought him up to see Allen. He shook his head very sadly as he felt the pulse.

‘Will he recover, sir?’ said Mrs Heyson.

‘He is young and strong, Madame,’ was the reply, ‘and so has many chances in his favour. He *may* possibly recover.’ He then turned to Philip and asked what medicine he was giving him.

Philip told him, and Mr Griffith assured the anxious mother that nothing better could be done. But as he went down-stairs with Philip, Mr Griffith shook his head and said,

‘I don't think the poor fellow will ever

get over it. The brain is injured. The blow that caused that wound must have been a frightful one. I wonder it did not kill him on the spot!’ Then as he was going away he stopped and said, ‘By the by! I have just been told that my gardener, old John, you know, has been arrested for the murder of his daughter some time ago. It appears that the old fellow’s name is John Wright.’

‘When was he arrested?’ asked Philip.

‘Last night. It appears that it is your brother Tom whom he assaulted last night, and who gave him in charge to a country policeman. The constable himself told me.’

‘I must see to this!’ cried Philip. ‘I don’t believe the man killed his daughter. I have heard the story of poor Katie! In fact, I attended her during an illness in London! Do you think the man is guilty?’

‘Well! As far as I know, he was most inoffensive. I know that my little ones were very fond of him. Ettie was, most of all. And the man tamed a lot of robins, a whole family,

sir. I don't really believe he would kill his own child.'

With that they separated. During the day many things happened, and Philip never forgot it to the end of his life.

CHAPTER XIII.

PHILIP VISITS JOHN WRIGHT IN PRISON—‘I DO NOT THINK I KILLED KATIE’—TOM DARRELL NOWHERE TO BE FOUND—ALLEN BECOMES WORSE—AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS—ALL HOPE IS LOST—‘KISS ME, ADÈLE.’—

ABOUT eight o'clock Allen fell asleep, quite worn out by the delirium that had attacked him. He was sleeping still when Philip went out, with the intention of paying a visit to John Wright. Mrs Heyson had obliged Adèle to go to lie down, and Edith and Florry stayed with her instead. Philip set off on his errand of justice and mercy. Mr Heyson walked with him part of the way, but neither felt much inclined for ordinary conversation, and their hearts were too full for them to dare to talk about Allen. They separated at the High Street, and Philip

walked on to the jail. He readily found admittance, but was told that he must bring a magistrate's letter before he could see the prisoner. But after some little talk, was permitted to enter John Wright's cell. The unfortunate man was seated on the floor. Deep misery had pressed its brand upon his face—and on the cheeks Philip could see the marks of tears. He looked up when Philip was shown in, and recognized him at once. He saw too the kind, compassionate look in his visitor's countenance, and stood up. His hands were unmanacled now.

'I am sorry to see you here, John,' said Philip.

'Perhaps I deserve it, sir!' answered he; 'but still I don't think I shall be here long.'

'Nor do I,' said Philip; 'for certainly there shall be nothing left undone to help you out. That is, of course, if you are innocent.'

'I am not innocent, and yet I am not guilty, sir,' said John Wright. 'I longed to kill him, but God has each time prevented me.'

‘Kill him! Whom do you speak of?’ cried Philip.

‘You know very well,’ cried John; ‘I speak of the man who took my girl away from me—your brother, Tom Darrell!’

Philip winced.

‘But are you certain that he took her away? I know that Katie left Shirley of her own accord. It was after——after you had struck her in Shirley Wood.’

‘Oh, my God! Forgive me!’ groaned the poor wretch.

‘You know that I attended her all through the illness which, mark this, *resulted* from that blow. And from her own lips I had all the sad story. I can tell you another fact. Your poor child was still pure and unsullied when I last saw her.’

‘Thank God! And bless you, sir, for your kindness to poor Katie. But,’ he added, ‘Tom Darrell took her away from the shop in Holborn. I followed them to Fenchurch Street Station, and then on to Epping.’

‘Yes,’ cried Philip, ‘and there you tried to

kill Tom Darrell, but did not succeed. And poor Katie was found drowned in a pond in the forest. But you are charged with having murdered her. How is that?’

‘I cannot tell,’ cried John Wright. ‘I do not think I killed Katie.’ Then he looked up wistfully in Philip’s face—something evidently puzzled him. Presently he spoke again and solved the question that was perplexing him.

‘Why do you behave so kindly to me, Dr Darrell?’ he asked. ‘You know I tried to kill your brother, and yet you come to me here, trying to help me.’

Philip heard him asking this question, and he smiled very sadly. The man’s ignorance was so great. And yet he was also partly in the right; for it is seldom that the friends or relations of an injured man come forward to help the one who did the injury.

So Philip answered him. And for the first time in his life John Wright understood to the full how great a thing a human life is. When he heard Philip’s grave voice telling him that above the family, above brother or sister, there

exists a higher claim yet, the claim of a suffering fellow-man. That where injustice has raised its hand to smite the weak or the ignorant, Duty bade every right-minded man to step in and endeavour to stay that hand. When he heard the glorious words that raised him even in his own estimation, by placing him upon the vast platform of humanity, and when Philip's voice trembled with emotion as he described with terrible minuteness the life that John Wright must have led for many years, and bewailed that he should have grown up in such terrible ignorance, Philip being all in earnest, John Wright was touched to the heart by such pure doctrine. The vague myth his mind had conceived the Deity to be was destroyed. And he saw clearly how inevitable are the punishments of the infraction of the Deity's Law. He saw how vengeance begat hate, and hate the blindness of madness. Evil showed itself to him all undisguised, and the poor wretch recognized how heinous had been his offence against God and man.

He saw that he had no right to take ven-

geance into his own hand, and he bowed his head and wept.

‘Because Tom Darrell wronged your daughter was no sufficient reason for you to raise your hand against your fellow-man,’ said Philip. ‘I now see you accused of a crime that I do believe you never committed. I should be a coward and the vilest of God’s creatures did I hold back all the evidence I can give to disprove the accusation. I should be unworthy to hold my head erect did I refuse to help you, and refuse only because you had tried to kill my brother—you would not have done even that, only that you were so ignorant.’ And with those words Philip left him, full of hope, full of trust, full of Light!

Very sad, and oppressed with a feeling of despair, that a man so ignorant of all the Rights and Duties of Man, as John Wright, could exist in this great and highly civilized country, Philip walked away from the prison and set out for his brother’s house. He found the old housekeeper highly perplexed.

Mr Darrell had evidently come in the preceding night, for the bed had been slept upon, there was dirty water of a brownish red tinge in the wash-basin, and his razor was on the dressing-table. Philip ran up to the room and examined it. He saw the razor, and found on the ground a piece of whitey-brown paper, on which Tom had wiped the lather and the hairs of his moustache and beard. Philip saw slight stains of blood on the pillow, and the foot of the bed was muddied. Evidently Tom had shaved himself, and then thrown himself all dressed on the outside of the bed. And there were also some ashes, as of burnt papers, littering the fire-grate. As he went down, the housekeeper met him, and led him to the larder, where she showed him the crumbs on the floor and on the bread-shelf, and the knife, still stained with the juice of the meat. These mute witnesses told them that some one had been there. And adding their testimony to that of the disordered bedroom, it became a certainty that no other than Tom Darrell had been that one. Philip in-

stantly set off, and made inquiries concerning him at all his usual haunts, but could not find him or hear anything about him at any of them. At last he walked to the station, and there found news of his brother. A porter had seen him go up in the London train, the first that left Maidstone that morning. He had a large black leather valise in his hand. And that was all that Philip could learn about Tom.

He never saw him after this. And it was only years after that he learnt where he had gone to, and what had become of him.

Strangely upset by these quickly following catastrophes, Philip walked back home in a species of daze. Near Mr Griffith's, a woman came up to him and touched his arm. He turned round, but did not know who the woman was. She looked half savagely at him, and said—

‘What has become of John Wright?’

‘I saw him half-an-hour ago in the jail, ma’am,’ said Philip.

‘Ah, he will be punished at last for killing my poor child!’ cried the woman.

‘Good God,’ thought Philip, ‘what does this mean? Has he killed somebody after all?’

‘Why are you so glad? And who are you, ma’am?’ asked Philip.

‘I am Mrs Wright,’ said the woman.

‘What, are you Katie’s mother?’ cried Philip.

‘Yes!’ she said.

‘Then you are all wrong! I don’t believe your husband killed Katie!’ said Philip. But the woman laughed savagely and mockingly.

‘I know he did,’ she said. ‘I saw him with his hands covered with her blood.’

With that she rushed away, taking the direction of the gaol.

Philip walked sadly on, completely unmanned. Such visions, such facts, I should say, of savage hatred, of ignoble and degrading passions, had been shown to him within the last three days that his mind was terrified and his heart chilled at the contemplation of so much misery. He had woven such noble

pictures of life, such brave fulfilment of duty, such pure touches of honourable feeling, such profound satisfaction and happiness over work well and steadily done. He had been living in a world peopled by the Philosophers of Antiquity. He had so loved to muse over and venerate the noble lives of Marcus Aurelius, of Epictetus, of Christ, of Socrates, and all the rest of the great and wise, that he had forgotten much of the every-day life of our human existence, until these rude shocks had taught him once again that by the side of the life of Epictetus is the story of 'Candide,' and the romance of 'Rasselas.'

Only Allen Heyson's pure love for Adèle stood out in chaste relief against this background of base motives and dastardly revenge. And Allen's brave devotion even was sullied by the touch of a passion that he ought to have crushed out of his heart.

Philip was very sad. He had lost his brother, now he seemed in danger of losing one of the truest friends he ever had. Allen's brave love, honest heart, and constant de-

votion have led only to this. And his wound was so serious in its after effects that he will probably never recover.

When Philip reached home again, he saw his little phaeton waiting at the door, and that reminded him that his work for the day had yet to be done. When he went into the house, he found that during his short absence Allen had become worse. He was more delirious than ever. So Philip went up to the bed-room at once.

Allen did not recognize him in the least, but let him take his hand to feel the pulse without moving. Only he talked all the time, spoke of the old days at school where Philip and he had passed many happy hours. He seemed as if he were speaking to Philip, for he asked once or twice whether he remembered the 'Kangaroo Step.' It was a peculiar sort of hopping run Philip and he used to practise along the sandy downs by the sea-side at Fort Philippe. Philip spoke to him, but could not succeed in attracting his attention. Then presently he began the story of his love again.

And Adèle, who had been unable to sleep, wept again to hear the tale of pure brave devotion. Often he stopped and pressed his hand to his head with a look of pain on his face. Then would begin again with increased violence. His mother had bathed his hands and face, and the hair was brushed away off the forehead. His face was delicately pale without ghastliness. Philip felt the pulse. It was quick and hard, beating 117 beats to the minute—that was 10 higher than when Philip went out at eight o'clock.

He gave him some of his medicine again, and left ample directions with Mrs Heyson as to what she should do in case of emergencies. Then he bade them good-bye for the moment, and went off to see his patients. Mr Griffith called over before he went out, to see Allen. He was just the same.

Philip hurried through his work that morning, and managed to get most of it done by dinner-time. As soon as he came in he went up to see Allen. Mr Heyson was there,

having just come in from his office. He was very down-hearted, for Allen and he had been not only father and son, but true friends and companions as well. And the elder knew that he could never again find any one who could be to him what his brave boy Allen was. He was afraid to look forward. Allen's condition had not changed in the least; his delirium was not lessened, and he had not slept. He had not even dozed since about nine o'clock. The pulse was two or three beats higher, that was all the change.

Philip explained to Mr Heyson how matters stood, and persuaded them all to come down and dine. By dint of entreaty they consented, and were debating as to who should watch while the others eat, when Adèle volunteered, and would not be refused.

So they went down, leaving her in the sick-room. She sat by the bed-side again, and took Allen's burning hand in hers. He perhaps felt the touch, for he pressed her hand gently; then dozed off to sleep for a few

minutes. But suddenly awoke, and before Adèle could stop him, sat upright in the bed and began to talk with great vehemence.

‘I shall watch him, wherever he goes! Adèle! Adèle! Don’t listen to him! Don’t let him kiss you! My God, have mercy on me! I can stand it no longer! I must go and save Adèle!’ And with an eager movement he threw the bed-clothes away from him. Adèle screamed for help, but before any one could come Allen had got out of the bed, notwithstanding her attempts to prevent him, and suddenly stood on his feet and walked towards the door. But at the very moment his father reached the landing he tottered. Adèle tried to catch him in her arms, but he fell forward and his head struck with fearful violence against the wall, and he lay on the ground motionless and insensible.

Philip rushed up at the noise of the fall, and entered the room just as Allen’s father raised his son in his arms and laid him on the bed again.

The wound in the head had been

re-opened by the blow and bled profusely, resisting every effort to stop it. Philip sent over to Mr Griffith, and the two skilled men at last managed to stop the flow of blood. But when it was done Mr Griffith looked at his partner and said—

‘ All hope is gone now, Mr Darrell ! ’

And Philip felt that indeed it must be so.

Allen had lost a very large quantity of blood. They gave him some brandy, which helped to revive him. But every five minutes he grew weaker and weaker.

They had all assembled in the room. Allen’s eyes were shut, and he lay without movement as if dead.

Adèle took his hand again and at once he opened his eyes. All the delirium was gone now. And one by one he recognized them, and smiled gently at them. An ethereal beauty had settled upon his face, and the brave loving soul seemed to be looking out of his eyes, longing for the moment that would set it free.

An inexpressible sadness came upon them,

and tears slowly gathered in their eyes. Then Allen spoke. His voice was very weak and low, but had a pure clear ringing sound.

‘Mother,’ he said, ‘come near to me, I want you to kiss me!’ Mrs Heyson came, bent over him, and his lips, now growing cold, were united to hers.

‘Now Father!’ whispered Allen. And as his father bent over him he said, ‘Shall you miss me much?’ but his father could not answer him, for a great lump had risen in his throat.

Then he called for Edith and Florry, and when they had kissed him, he called for his mother again. Adèle grew quite cold, she was afraid Allen meant not to bid her good-bye. But he asked his mother in a whisper to leave him alone with Adèle and Philip, as he wished to say something to them. So all left the room but they, and Allen beckoned to them to come close to him.

Philip sat on the bed and Adèle knelt down by it. Then Allen extended a hand to each of them, and for a few moments no one

spoke. He seemed to be thinking and trying to gather up his strength. Philip could feel a cold perspiration on his friend's hand ; Adèle only bowed over it, and kissed it reverently and humbly. It had been one of the two that had lifted her from the ground, and held the reins as the pony whirled her away in the little carriage out of all danger. The silence during those short moments was terribly oppressive. Adèle felt it bearing upon her like a heavy burden. And when Allen spoke again she started ; the stillness seemed broken by a loud clap of thunder. And yet his voice was very low, very weak, and he stopped many times before he had finished the little he had to say.

‘ Philip, dear friend, do not be pained by what I am going to tell you,’ he began, and paused for a second or too. ‘ I should not die happy were I not to—tell you of it. You remember what I told you in the little work-house in—the garden ?’ Philip nodded in sign that he remembered.

Allen went on again. ‘ That was true

when I told you of it ! But now—Adèle does not love Tom any longer !’

Philip started as he saw Adèle throw up her hands and cry aloud, ‘ Oh, my God ! have pity on me !’

Allen smiled sadly at Philip, as if to say, ‘ See, I did not deceive you !’ and he understood the look at once.

‘ Yes, Philip,’ continued Allen, ‘ Adèle was sorely tempted ; but God saved her from falling, even at the last moment. And, Philip, forgive me for my saying it, but I must tell you that in great part you were to blame for this. You are very quick-tempered, and you have not always made proper allowances for poor Adèle’s bringing up. You ought to have thought more about Mme De Brenne, and have been very tender and forbearing over Adèle’s deficiencies.’ Here he stopped, quite exhausted. Philip had become very pale, and his nostrils and lips twitched from suppressed emotion. But he said not a word, and waiting for Allen to begin again, he kept his eyes moodily lowered.

Adèle was sobbing over Allen's hand, her face all crimson with shame.

'I could not say all this to you, and in Adèle's presence,' continued Allen, 'only that I know that my hours on earth are numbered. Oh, Philip! Adèle loves you very dearly, and has never, I believe, ceased to love you; but your strange harshness made her think that you no longer loved her, and so in very despair she turned to Tom Darrell. Is it not so, Adèle?'

'Oh, no, no!' she cried in an agonized voice. 'You make me seem better than I am. I was very weak, very wicked, and I should have been lost but for you!'

Philip sprang from the bed, as if he had been struck. He could bear it no longer.

'Adèle! Adèle!' he cried. 'Look up to me. Tell me from your own lips that you have never ceased to be pure!

She raised her head, and looking through the tears in her eyes up to her husband, she said—

'Oh, Philip! I am pure, and still worthy of

your love! But had it not been for Allen's devotion you would have lost me for ever!

Philip sank on his knees by Adèle's side, and covering his face with his hands, sobbed aloud. The strong man was weak as a child, but his tears had the bitter taste of Dead Sea fruit.

'When I am dead,' said Allen, 'perhaps Adèle will tell you all. But I should wish her to wait for a long time, even for some years, so that this sorrow may have passed away.'

Adèle and Philip said nothing. Only he looked up, and the brave trustfulness in his eyes touched his friend's heart.

'Philip!' he whispered, 'promise me you will always love her! Always believe in her purity and truth.' And Philip stretched forth his hand and grasped Allen's, and said one word only—

'Yes!'

But Allen felt satisfied; for there was no mistaking the earnest look and voice.

Then Philip turned to his wife, and kissed her tenderly and lovingly. But Adèle sobbed

more violently than before. His forgiveness was harder to bear than his anger would have been.

Then Allen asked Philip to call up his mother, and father, and sisters. And when they came back he was very weak, and a strange look of mingled pain and triumphant joy was upon his face. His mother came up to him, and took his hand. Philip and Adèle were still by the bed-side. The sky had been clouded over, but just as they had all assembled again near the bed the clouds parted, and the pure sun-light streamed in at the window. It rested on Allen's face, and on the pillow, and he seemed as if bathed in a flood of liquid gold.

Suddenly he sat up, and held out his hands to Adèle. She stood up instantly, and quickly took them in her own. Then Allen drew her gently to him and nestled his head on her shoulder.

'Kiss me, Adèle!' he said. She bent her head and kissed him tenderly and humbly. His eyes took in the remorseful, repent-

ant look of Adèle's face, and gently, slowly closed.

All was silence in the room. The watchers round the bed were inexpressibly sad. They waited some time patiently for Allen to move.

But Allen Heyson did not move. His eyes did not unclose. And his hands clasped Adèle's very tightly. His brave loving soul had leapt to his lips to meet Adèle's kiss, and had gently left its earthly abode as his head lay upon her breast.

* * * *

They came to Adèle, and reverently supported the body as she drew away, and they laid him tenderly back upon the pillow.

They drew the blind down. And Philip led poor Mr Heyson from the room; but his mother and sisters and Philip's wife stayed by Allen's death-bed, and poured out the grief of their hearts in humble earnest prayer.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRIAL OF JOHN WRIGHT FOR THE MURDER OF HIS DAUGHTER—DISCLOSURES CONCERNING TOM DARRELL—WITNESSES COME FROM SHIRLEY, FROM LONDON, FROM LEYTON, AND FROM MAIDSTONE—JOHN WRIGHT IS ACQUITTED—ADÈLE LEARNS HOW BASE TOM DARRELL WAS.

THREE days after Allen's death Mr Fairtree arrived in Maidstone, with his fresh warrant for the arrest of John Wright for the murder of his daughter. But when he found that his criminal was already secured, and had been committed for trial, he went at once to Philip Darrell, with the view of concerting matters with him as to the surest way of finding evidence against the culprit. He could prove satisfactorily that John Wright had been seen at Leyton two days before Katie was found drowned. He could prove that he

carried with him a thick cudgel when he left London, and that he returned without it. And he could produce the cudgel and witnesses who could swear to its having been found in the forest glade, covered with stains of blood. He had Mrs Wright to prove that her husband was angry with Katie, and had cursed her before he left Shirley. All this he could prove, and he told Philip Darrell that he could do so. But he found Philip in a very different mood ; for he was thoroughly resolved to do all in his power to prove John Wright innocent. He told the astonished Detective that he was himself prepared to swear that Wright had no desire to kill his daughter, but to kill Tom Darrell. And, in short, Mr Fairtree left Philip's house much impressed with the fact that it would probably be a very difficult matter to prove his man guilty.

In due course the trial came on. Philip and Mr Griffith had engaged a sharp lawyer for the defence, and very soon after the trial began Mr Rockley showed that their confid-

ence had not been misplaced. But it was when John Wright's pitiful story was told by this clever man that the jury began to feel thoroughly interested in the case. Then a bold and straightforward recital of Tom Darrell's evil life was laid before the world. Nothing seemed to have been forgotten. The incidents of the tin pannikin, the coral earrings lost and found ; the miserable final scene in the wood at Shirley, when John Wright found his daughter with the man he supposed her seducer ; all was told with a *verve* and force of delineation that made a profound impression upon every one present. But the interest reached its culminating point when the lawyer frankly avowed that the prisoner at the bar had been actuated by feelings of revenge to attempt Mr Tom Darrell's life ; but that, luckily or providentially, those attempts had been vain. Then the English press caught up the cry, and articles appeared on the affair, always kept within the due bounds of the respect due to the law. And, finally, when the speech for the defence was over, all

Maidstone was filled with excitement. All that the Crown could prove by its witnesses was that John Wright had been seen near Epping Wood, and that a blood-stained cudgel was found in a certain glade in the forest, and that Katie Wright was discovered drowned not far from this part of the wood. All this was not denied by the defence; but after the witnesses for the Crown had given their evidence, Mr Rockley proceeded to call his witnesses. First came Philip, who swore that the girl Katie Wright had been carried in a faint into the same house where Tom Darrell had lain so dangerously ill. And he also swore that he attended and nursed his brother through a dangerous illness, caused by a blow on the back of the head.

After Philip came Esther and Simon, the Good Samaritans who had taken Tom into their house. Their evidence proved that Katie Wright was brought into their house insensible, at the same time that Tom had been carried in, or at least within the same hour, and they told how she had stood up

suddenly, and rushed from the house, screaming, 'Tom! oh, Tom!' And they also gave testimony as to the wound on Tom Darrell's head.

After them came the doctor, whom Katie had thrust rudely aside when she stood up. He described the girl perfectly, and remembered the incident well. He also swore to Tom Darrell being carried in with a contusion on the head, and described the character of the wound.

Then came the neighbours who had brought Tom Darrell out of the forest; then the man who found the cudgel; then those who had found Katie Wright in the water. The case was still a little doubtful, when Mr Rockley brought in three witnesses who swore they had met a man answering to John Wright's description rushing violently away through the forest. Then came witnesses who proved that John Wright was standing at his usual post the following morning at six o'clock. Finally, Mr Rockley handed in the Report of the Inquest held on Katie

Wright, from which it appeared that two medical men had given it as their deliberate opinion that she had not been dead twelve hours when she was found.

This report decided the case. The Judge summed up, the jury retired, and in fifteen minutes returned, and their foreman announced the verdict—‘Not Guilty!’

Then the Judge addressed a few words of grave advice and warning to the unfortunate man, and told him to think well over the events of the day, and to take to heart the signal mercy of Heaven that had spared him from committing the horrible crime of pre-meditated murder.

There was a hush in the court as the Judge concluded, and John Wright was led away, and in half-an-hour’s time stood in the street a free man. Free! but wonderfully changed from the man who had assaulted Tom Darrell.

Mr Griffith and Philip took him home, and told him on the way that nothing would be altered in his position, he could still keep

his place as gardener. Full of gratitude, he walked down the gravel-path towards the little house. As he drew near to it he noticed that some alteration had taken place. The robins were on the window-sill waiting. There were clean muslin blinds across the window, and the glowing light of a fire shone through the glass. The path just in front of the little house was swept clear of leaves and dirt, and the place seemed to have acquired all at once a gentle home-like look.

John Wright paused in gratified surprise. Then looked up to where the clear blue vault of heaven shone, and his lips moved softly, as if with the words of a thanksgiving prayer. As he neared the window he walked very gently. He looked through it, and started as he saw a woman seated, with head bent down, by the fireside. He seemed to recognize the form as one that had been very familiar to him. He hurriedly opened the door, and walked in. The woman stood up, and John Wright saw that it was his wife.

They stood a moment face to face.

‘John! Can you forgive me?’ said the woman.

He looked steadily at her for a moment, then stepped forward, and with a loud cry fell upon her neck, weeping.

* * * * *

All through this trial no one had read the reports with such painful eagerness as Adèle. Every fresh line almost was a new revelation, or more correctly speaking, a confirmation of Tom Darrell’s utter worthlessness. As she read her face would burn with shame, and her heart grow cold at the thought of the horrible sin from which Allen had torn her. Philip was very kind, and very gentle, but this new life was exquisitely painful to Adèle, for every moment she thought of how near she had been to losing all. And she remembered, too, that although Philip would scold her sometimes very severely, and almost harshly, he had never done so without just cause. At other times no one could be more loving or tender; and each day, as she read the reports in the papers, she felt that her

own weakness, or Tom's seductive cunning, must indeed have been very great, for her to forget her love and her duty. From the reports she gathered that Tom Darrell had played her false in every way. She had asked him whether he had taken Katie away, and he had denied it. She had asked him whether he had loved her; he had also denied that. And during the trial the utter falseness of his answers to her had been shown with terrible distinctness.

She recognized to the full the utter baseness of Tom Darrell, and her shame and remorse were only greater, and more poignant, when she came to contrast this mean, cunning, lying fellow, with simple-hearted, upright, and loving Philip. She shrank from her husband's caresses as if she feared that to touch her would be pollution to him. She was very silent, and seldom laughed now; her gaiety was quenched by the remorse she felt incessantly for brave Allen Heyson. Every night she went softly to the side of the bed whereon he had died, and would kneel

and pray in utter prostration and despair. She regarded herself as his murderess, and mourned day after day.

No one but Adèle knew how Allen had come to his death, excepting Tom Darrell, who might have seen him knocked down, and John Wright who had struck the blow. But John Wright knew nothing of it. He imagined he had struck down his enemy, but that he had sprung up again to rush after him. That was all he knew. So that really Adèle was the sole depositary of this sad secret. Perhaps Allen was thinking of it when he enjoined her, almost with his last breath, to say nothing of it all until years had passed over them.

And that was why she looked upon herself as the murderess of Allen Heyson.

Little by little, however, she ceased to shrink from her husband's kisses. Philip was always so kind and gentle that he soon succeeded in making her feel that he wished the past to be forgotten and buried in Allen Heyson's grave. He told her once that he had

forgiven her, and taken her anew to the loving heart that had never for a single hour ceased to cherish her. And the Heysons were no less kind and forgiving. With keen perception Mrs Heyson perceived that there was something wrong in Philip's house; so she sent Edith or Florry every day to stay with Adèle, and endeavour to win her to habits of order and economy.

And they succeeded thoroughly. Adèle could bear anything from Allen's sisters, and they had so gentle and loving a manner of teaching her, that the task was very sweet to both.

Poor old Heyson could find no pleasure for a long time, excepting when he was with Philip Darrell. Every evening he came, under the pretext of fetching Edith or Florry, and would have long, very serious conversations with Philip. They would often talk of Allen; and sometimes Mr Heyson would avow that he was tormented by terrible doubts as to whether he had done right in bringing up Allen in so secular a manner, that he regarded

at last his Duty as higher than any Religion that he could learn upon earth.

And very often Philip had great difficulty in persuading him that his teaching had been all in the right direction, and that nothing could be nobler or more God-like than Allen's performance of his duty.

The old man loved to talk with Philip on these subjects, for he understood how unaffectedly and truly Philip revered God; and he liked to feel his own mind expand by communion with Philip's powerful and original turn of thought. Philip had read deeply, and his philosophic lore shone out in his conversation.

Adèle day by day became more like her old self, and as the glamour Tom's fascinating beauty had thrown over her faded away, so she saw again Philip's pure, noble, and unselfish character, and learned in very deed to love him with all her heart and all her strength.

And little by little the deep grief of our friends became hallowed to a tender sorrow,

that forgot the little weaknesses of him who had died so young, and only loved to remember Allen's tender heart, his honest frankness, his upright, brave bearing, and the sweet affection he had for them all.

Adèle, perhaps, was the one who least forgot her grief. She could never dismiss from her mind that last sorrowful scene. She will never be able to forget that, with her kiss upon his lips, her face reflected in his eyes, Allen had closed his eyes for ever upon this earthly life.

And with the old French superstition lingering in her heart, Adèle carried flowers every Sunday, and often during the week, to scatter upon his grave. There she would pray, humbly and reverently, for guidance and forgiveness, and many tears of repentance and remorse fell upon Allen Heyson's last home.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER FOUR YEARS—ADÈLE'S CONFESSION—'COME, SIT BY MY SIDE, DARLING!'—THE LAST OF TOM DARRELL—CONCLUSION.

TIME hallows grief, and gradually effaces it. So it has been here in the little family circle the reader and author have looked upon together.

But kind Mrs Heyson has gone to join her son, her Allen, and Edith and Florry have been both married some time now. Edith has a little girl more than a year old, but Florry has not been married long enough yet to have a child. But I believe there is a nurse engaged for next September, and I know Philip has promised to attend her in her confinement.

For a while Mr Heyson lived solitarily at

the Woodlands, but three months after Florry's marriage he came begging Philip and Adèle to come and stay with him, as he was so lonely.

For some time Philip did not like to accept, but now he and Adèle and Charlie are with Mr Heyson at the Woodlands. He would have had one of his daughters to live with him, only that was impossible, as Edith's husband is at Rochester and Florry is at Chatham. They often come to see him, and none were so pleased as they when Philip consented to make the Woodlands his home.

Adèle shrank from going to Mr Heyson's at first, but soon she grew reconciled to it, and likes it very much now.

Philip and Adèle are both wiser as well as older than when Allen Heyson died, and they are more truly united now than ever before. Adèle has learned to know thoroughly how great and brave Philip is, and how truly he always loves her; and Philip has long ago forgotten the sad story Allen told him just before he died.

But all these recollections were brought back to him one evening by Adèle.

Little Charlie was being bathed, and Philip, with a loving father's fondness, was looking on. The little man was just two years old, and a bonny, strong boy. He had Philip's brave brown eyes and brown hair, and no one could see him without noticing the strong likeness. Old Mrs Darrell had said that Charlie was a *handsome* likeness of his father.

When the child was towelled dry, and Adèle had put on his little night-shirt, she sent him over to his father to say good-night.

'Good-night, Papsy,' said Charlie.

Philip caught him up in his arms and set him on his knee, the child looking up to him with loving confidence.

'Whose boy are you?' said Philip.

'Papa's!' said Charlie.

'Who is Papa?' asked Philip.

'You is Papa,' replied Charlie.

'And *what* is Papa?' asked Philip, with

his eyes twinkling in joyous expectation of the answer.

‘He is the Pet One!’ cried Charlie, and his father instantly fell to devouring him with kisses.

This was the little game they had every night when Philip was at home, and they never lost the relish for it.

When Charlie was cosily tucked away in his crib, Philip and Adèle went down-stairs. Adèle was very serious, almost sad, and she sat by the fireside in silence.

Philip went to his easy-chair and took his book again. It was the ‘Emile,’ and a slip of paper was marking the part where the *Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard* begins. We have seen how Philip was imbued with the spirit of the beautiful deistic confession. There was a lamp by his side, and a soft light filled the room. The fire was burning softly and brightly. Suddenly Adèle looked up and spoke.

‘Philip! Do you remember what happened this day four years ago?’

Philip started at the painful memories that came instantly thronging back to him. 'Yes, Adèle! I remember!' he answered.

'Dear Allen died this day four years ago. You know that, Philip, but you never knew why or how he came by his death. You remember he asked me to say nothing till years had passed away. I have waited with weary patience, and my heart has ached sorely all the time. I have felt as if every kiss you gave me was received by me under equivocation. I have not felt worthy of you, Philip, while I have kept this long and painful silence! Now I must tell you all.'

Philip held his hand up.

'I would rather you said nothing more, Adèle,' he said, 'to awaken such painful recollections. I have forgotten and forgiven all!'

'No! Oh! No!' cried Adèle, 'you have not forgiven all, since you do not know all. When Allen Heyson knocked at the door and you came out and found him stretched insensible on the gravel-walk, you did not know that he

had just rescued me—Adèle—from what would have been worse than Death. Allen Heyson drove me back home to you in the very carriage that was to have taken me away with Tom Darrell.’

‘Enough! Enough!’ cried Philip, interrupting her.

‘No, it is not enough!’ said Adèle; and in brief words she told him all. How she had been tempted, and how she had consented to fly with Tom. And how Allen had interposed at the very last moment, and had been struck to the earth by the blow that was meant for Tom.

And when she had told everything she trembled, and tears were running down her cheeks as she said, ‘And now, Philip, my husband, can you forgive me and love me as before?’ She waited with downcast eyes for Philip to speak. The moments were like hours to her, so full were they of the terrible agony of suspense. Yet she did not deem her repentance sincere till she should have told all to Philip and have been forgiven at the last.

The pain and agony of these few instants was becoming well-nigh insupportable. Adèle trembled with the fear lest she should have forfeited her husband's esteem and love. She had learned to love and cherish him so dearly, there was so pure a link between them now, in Charlie. And she trembled lest it should be all lost. But at that moment Philip raised his head and looked at her. His eyes were full of tears, and his lips quivered, and his voice was soft and low as he said—

‘Come, sit by my side, darling!’ and Adèle sprang up and went and sat on the low stool by his easy-chair. Then his hand came gently down, and he fell to stroking and playing with her soft flowing hair in perfect stillness. The fire-light leapt and gleamed fitfully upon wall and ceiling. Adèle breathed very low. The silence was very solemn, and made her feel a slight chill. Suddenly Philip ceased stroking her hair and he bent down his head. Adèle looked up, their eyes met, and tenderly and lovingly Philip kissed her lips. And

Adèle's heart gave a great beat, for she knew that at last she had won full forgiveness.

That was all! Neither moved for a time. Neither spoke. The calm was full of joy and peace! They sat and looked at the glowing fire.

Then there came a knock at the door—a postman's knock—and the servant brought in a bulky letter. The postmark was Fort Henry, Colorado. Philip opened the parcel—a small note-book fell out and a letter. He took up the letter and read it aloud.

It gave a brief account of the death from wounds received in an Indian border fight, in which he had displayed the greatest bravery, of a man who had always been known up till that time by the nickname of 'Scarred-faced Tom.' But before his death he had asked them to forward an account of it to Dr Philip Darrell, and had told them that his own name was Tom Darrell. A postscript added that a note-book with private memoranda was also enclosed at his request. The letter was signed by the captain commanding at Fort Henry.

Philip took up the note-book, and opened the pages. The first words he saw were these — ‘My treachery towards Philip and Adèle.’ And with a sudden movement he shut the book again and threw it upon the fire. Then he said to Adèle—

‘Darling, that book contains Tom’s account of his treachery. See! It has nearly all burnt away. May God pardon him as freely as I do!’

Adèle said simply, ‘Amen!’

* * * *

Mr Heyson came in shortly afterwards, and was surprised to find them sitting there so quiet and thoughtful. But he was also very pleased to see that Adèle was seated by her husband’s side, on the low stool, and that Philip’s right hand was softly caressing her hair. He had not seen her sitting thus for many a long day. And he too understood, though perhaps only very vaguely, that during the past four years there had been some strange phantom or thought that had kept them apart even when seeming most united.

But now all was over, the past could never come back again with its dangers, its tribulations, and sorrows.

This is all we have to tell about Philip Darrell. The best of friends must part ; and as we take leave of him, it is with the hope that God may incline our hearts to live as he lives. To be just and merciful, to be compassionate and kind, and finally when life comes to its close may we say, as Philip will, in the sublime words of Epictetus—

‘ Oh, God ! I thank thee, that Thou hast allowed me so to live, that I can leave life without fear and without reproach, and present myself before Thee with a pure and reverent heart.’

THE END.

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 084220109

